

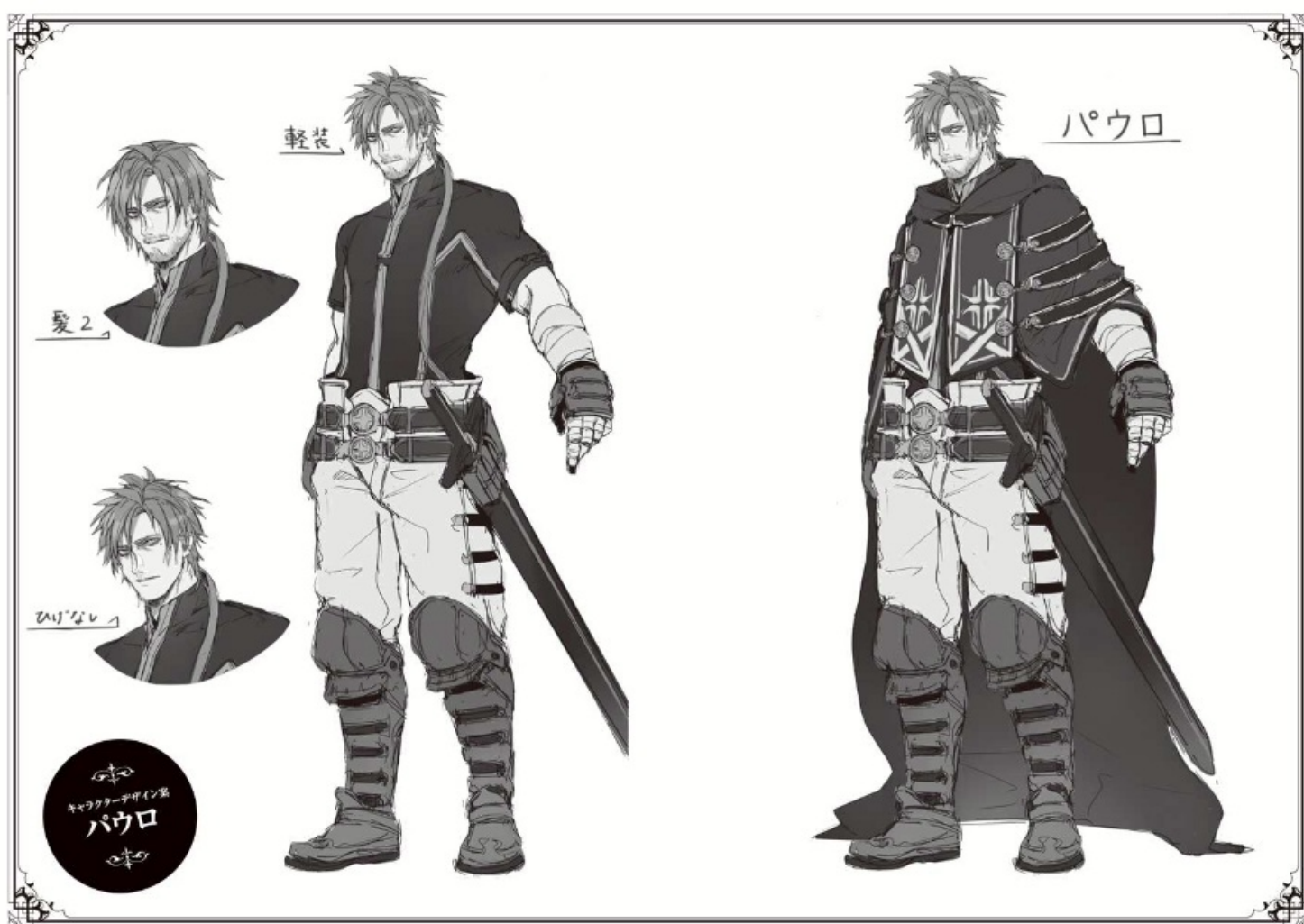
無職転生

5

Ritujin na Maganote
理不尽な孫の手

異世界行ったら
本気だす





ノルン



タルハンド



エリナリーゼ



Chapter 44 - Holy Milis Kingdom

Part 1

Holy Milis Kingdom.

Capital Milishion.

It is possible to get a full view of the city just from looking at it from the Holy Sword Road.

First, the [Nikolaus River] that flows out from the [Blue Dragon Mountain Range].

This flows down into the sparkling blue [Grand Lake].

Floating in the center of the [Grand Lake] is a great white castle, [White Palace].

Going even further down along the [Nikolaus River] from there.

Along the way you will find the shining golden [Great Church] and the shining silver [Adventurer's Guild Headquarters].

If you pay attention to your surroundings from there you will notice a systematic townscape spread out in front of you.

Finally, surrounding the city you will notice seven great towers and a region of meadows just outside.

Majesty and Harmony.

Possessing both of these qualities it could be called the world's most beautiful city.

Excerpt from the book [Walking the World] by Adventurer Bloody Count.

Part 2

It's certainly beautiful.

A harmony between blue and green you could only find in a fantasy world.

Adding to that the townscape has a well-regulated structure similar to Edo or Sapporo.

Eris went silent and just kept staring with her mouth open.

Ruijerd was just narrowing his eyes as he watched.

I thought it was "hana yori dango"^[1] for these two but it seems they clearly remember how to appreciate beautiful things.

"It's amazing isn't it?"

Then for some reason Gisu started boasting about it.

Why would you feel so proud about this?

Is what I was thinking, but certainly just having seen this makes you feel proud to know of it.

Even though I say that I don't really want to let this guy get too overconfident.

"It's amazing, but wouldn't there be problems with that huge lake during the rainy season?"

I started making negative remarks about it.

Although this is a genuine question.

The city is almost entirely in the center of the giant lake.

There were three straight months of continuous rain in the Great Forest just to the north of here.

Normally there would be some sort of effect over here as well.

"It seems it certainly was quite a problem in the past, but now those seven magic towers perfectly control the water. Therefore, they could rest easy and build the castle in the center of the lake. There are no walls right? That's because those towers are always projecting a barrier around it."

"I see, in other words in order to attack the Holy Milis Kingdom you would first need to destroy those seven towers somehow or other."

"Don't say anything too dangerous, or else if those Saint Knights overhear it they'll still capture you even if it's a joke you know?"

"...I'll be careful."

If I were to believe what Gisu was telling me, as long as those seven towers remain, the city will never be hit by any disaster or plague.

I don't really understand the theory behind it, but it sounds quite convenient.

"Hurry up, let's go!"

Eris shouted out excitedly and we continued moving forward on our cart.

Part 3

The City of Milishion is divided into four districts.

In the north, there is the [Residential District].

It's a section of private houses and blocks.

A place where the family of nobles and knights live, there are some differences from average citizens, but fundamentally they are all private houses in the residential district.

In the east, there is the [Commerce District].

It's a district where all sorts of merchants gather.

There are a large number of shops, but the structures are small.

It's a place where many companies meet and widen their trade contacts together, this world's business district.

Things like Blacksmiths and Auction houses are here as well.

In the south, there is the [Adventurers District].

It's a place where the Adventurers gather.

Centering around the Adventurers Guild Headquarters, there are all sorts of shops and inns aimed towards Adventurers.

There's also an area with a slum for ruined Adventurers with things like a gambling place, so it's a good idea to be careful.

For the most part, the slave market is in this district rather than the commerce district as well.

In the west, there is the [Holy District].

There are a number of places for those related to the Holy Milis Church to live.

The enormous Great Church is also here.

Also, the Holy Milis Knight group has their headquarters in this district.

Is what Gisu took the time to thoroughly teach us about one by one.

Part 4

We turned around and entered the city through the Adventurer's District.

According to Gisu, if Adventurers try to enter through districts other than the Adventurers District they'll be put through a certain amount of questioning and it can take quite a bit of time.

What a troublesome city.

The instant we entered the city, the air changed into quite a mixed one.

If you look at it from outside Milishion is beautiful, but after you enter it's no different from any other city.

Near the entrance to the city there were inns and stables.

Stall people were all lined up loudly calling out for customers to come in their direction.

A little ways down the main road I saw an Arms Shop.

There's probably a slightly cheaper inn down one of those thin alleyways.

Incidentally, the supposedly silver glowing Adventurer's Guild Headquarters was visible from the entrance of the city.

For the time being we left our cart at a stable.

After listening to them there's a service to take luggage to your inn for you.

It's a service that wasn't in other towns.

After all in a large city like this they've probably got to offer a perfect service otherwise they might go out of business.

"Now then, I've got some places to visit, so please excuse me here!"

After we left the horse in the stable Gisu abruptly said that.

"Eh? We're already disbanding?"

I thought it was surprising.

I thought we would stay in the same inn together.

"What's this? Does that make you lonely senpai?"

"Yeah, that makes me feel lonely."

I answered honestly to those words intended to tease me.

We've only known Gisu for a short period, but he's not a bad guy.

Finding partners who are on the same wavelength as you is a precious thing during travels.

Thanks to Gisu just how much stress do you think I've been relieved of?

Also, I feel depressed when I think about how the meals are going to be terrible again if he's gone.

"No need to feel lonely senpai. We'll meet again as long as we are in the same city."

Gisu shrugged his shoulders and patted my head.

Then just like that he started waving his hands around and walked away.

Then Eris stood in his way.

"Gisu!"

With her arms crossed and her jaw turned upwards, the usual imposing pose.

"Next time we meet teach me how to cook!"

"That's why I've said no way. You're persistent."

Gisu walked away to the side while scratching his head.

While doing that he also patted Ruijerd's shoulder.

"Then, you take care as well danna^[2]."

"You take care as well. Don't do too many bad things."

"I know that."

This time Gisu finally disappeared into the crowd while waving his hands.

It just happened in an instant.

So much that you wouldn't think we've spent two months together.

Really just parted in an instant.

Then just when that monkey face started to disappear.

Suddenly he turned around.

"Ah, that's right senpai. Make absolutely sure you show your face at the Adventurer's guild!"

"Hn? Ah, sure!"

We have to go to the Adventurer's Guild anyways, we have no choice but to earn some money.

However, I wonder why he's saying that now.

I don't really know, but after hearing my reply Gisu disappeared into the crowd

again.

Part 5

First off is searching for an inn.

Finding an inn is a basic action when we first arrive in a new town.

In Milishion there are a large number of inns spread all around the main street.

If you go down an alley and walk a little bit you'll arrive at something like an inn district.

After taking a look at each one we decided on an inn finally.

[Inn of Dawn's Light]^[3]

This inn was just a bit far off from the main street.

However, it was far from the slum district, and the public order wasn't bad.

Including some of the hidden services it offered, it was an inn that caters to around C~B rank Adventurers.

The fact that it doesn't get very much sunlight is a flaw, if you can call it a flaw.

Find an inn and organize things from the travels, if time permits visit the Adventurer's Guild and check the goods around the town, if even more time is still left take the time to relax and enjoy freely taking a look around, then return to the inn and have a future plans meeting.

That is the usual flow of events.

"Wouldn't it have been fine if we stayed in a cheaper place?"

Eris said that with an amazed face.

What she says is perfectly right.

We must be cautious with our money.

It's something I'm always saying.

Though right now we have just a little bit of flexibility to spare.

The money we earned while helping defend the Dorudia Village.

Then the money we received from Gyes.

Adding them together it is just a bit over 7 Milis Gold Coins.

It's certainly true we have no choice but to save up money, but we aren't in such a dire situation right now.

Therefore, this amount of luxury is fine.

Even I want to sleep on a soft bed from time to time.

"Well, isn't it fine from time to time."

After giving Eris a glance I walked to the room.

It's a pretty neat and good room.

The fact that there's a table and chairs prepared in the room is nice.

The room has a key to lock the door and the windows even have shutters.

It's not comparable to the business hotels from my previous world, but it's an above average quality for this world.

Now then, our actions after arriving at the inn were already decided.

Repairing our equipment and preparing a memo with consumable goods we need to restock.

Drying out the bed, washing the sheets, and sweeping while we're at it.

This pattern has become such a routine that I didn't even need to say anything everyone started working in silence.

By the time everything had finished the sun was setting and it was getting dark outside.

Since we arrived sometime around early afternoon.

The time to visit the guild has disappeared.

Well, even if we wait one or two days to visit the guild there's no real difference.

We ate some meals in the bar next door to the inn and then returned to our rooms.

Then we all sat in a circle facing each other.

It's time for our future plans meeting.

"Well then, it's time to start Team [Dead End]'s operations meeting. It's our first meeting in the capital city of Milis so let's make things exciting."

I struck the sides of my face and started clapping my hands and the others barely returned the clapping.

They're so bad at going with the flow. Well, it doesn't matter.

"Now then, we've finally made it this far."

I stated that to start things off.

It was a long journey after all.

A little over a year in the Magic Continent and then four months in the Great Forest.

One and a half years.

After a year and half has passed and finally.

Finally, we have arrived in a place where the human race lives again.

We've gone beyond the dangerous places.

From here on out the roads are properly taken care of and flat.

If I were to compare it to everything until now, then you could even call it safe.

Although in terms of distance we still have quite a long ways to go.

From Milis to Asura.

It's a distance of traveling halfway across the world.

No matter how easy of a ride it is, it won't shorten the distance we still have left to cover.

It seems like it will take another year or so.

In that case the number one problem would be...

Money.

"For the time being I would like to start earning some money while in this city."

"Why?"

I politely responded to Eris's question.

"I've understood it after visiting the Magic Continent and the Great Forest, but prices in the human race regions are quite expensive."

Then I remembered back to all the market prices I've seen until now.

I was unable to check the market prices in Saint Port, though I still remember the general market prices throughout Magic Continent and the prices from the inn town.

In comparison to those the prices in Holy Milis Kingdom and Asura Kingdom are expensive.

Even the cost of this inn, if you were to compare it to an inn in the Magic Continent, it's high enough your eyes would jump out from their sockets.

The human race places more importance on currency than other races as well.

I won't say anything about being greedy.

"The value of currency in Milis is high. It's the next most valuable after Asura Kingdom, in other words second in the world. The market prices are expensive but that also means the job rewards will also be high. Unlike how we did it in the Magic Continent staying in each town for roughly a week to gather money, it would probably be more efficient to stay in this city for a month and gather money."

The value of Milis currency is high.

In other words if we earn enough money in Milis then we don't even need to worry anymore, there will be no problems when we have to pay tolls to pass through to the Central Continent.

"We still don't know how much money it will cost to allow a Supard race to board the ship there as well."

When I mentioned the word ship Eris made an obviously displeased face.

She must be remembering her sea sickness.

It was probably a bad memory for her but it was a good memory for me.

I'll be there to assist you any time.

"We'll collect money here and then travel to Asura all in one go. Though if that's the case we most likely won't be able to give more publicity for the Supard race Ruijerd-san. Is that alright?"

Ruijerd silently nodded.

Well, spreading the publicity of the Supard race is mostly something I'm doing

because I enjoy it now.

If it were up to me I'd prefer to calm down and take my time a bit more to go around fixing the infamy of the Supard race.

Half a year or a full year.

If it's in a large city it just means there would be that much more of an effect.

However, just to make it up to here we've already surpassed one and a half years.

One and a half years.

It's not a short period.

I don't want to take more than this amount of time.

If you think about it, then it's like being missing for a year and a half.

My family should be quite worried.

I wonder what they are doing right now.

Just when I was thinking that I realized I hadn't sent a letter.

I kept thinking "send one, send one", but so many things ended up happening that I forgot along the way.

A letter, huh.

Alright.

"Let's make tomorrow into a free day."

We've used the concept of vacation days every so often up until now.

It was originally something to give Eris some room to breathe, but somewhere

along the way it became something for my own sake.

Eris never shows her fatigue and Ruijerd is a [Tough Guy].

The only pathetic and weak one is me.

Of course, even I have gained an amount of strength that can't even compare to my previous life.

I may be no match for these two, but I should have enough strength to match the average Adventurer in this world.

Therefore, it's not a matter of physical fatigue.

It's mental fatigue.

My heart is weak.

Every monster I kill while traveling adds to my accumulated stress.

Although I'm not really exhausted this time.

Information gathering, confirmation of guild jobs, and various other things.

If I were to put priority on those things then I'm sure I would end up forgetting the letter again. Since that's how it has been until now.

Therefore, I will spend the entire day tomorrow ensuring that I send the letter so I don't forget this time.

"Rudeus, is your body condition bad again?"

"No, this time is a different matter. I was thinking about sending a letter."

"Letter?"

In response to Eris's question I nodded.

"Yes, a letter to notify that we are safe."

"Hmmm... Well, it should be alright if I just leave it to Rudeus."

"Yeah."

Tomorrow I'll write a letter.

After I've started to remember about Buena Village, I'll write Paul and Sylphy a letter.

He told me not to send any letters, but well, in this situation he really can't say no.

The chances that the letter will make it there aren't all that high though...

When I was exchanging letters with Roxy from Asura Kingdom to Shiron Kingdom, one in seven letters never made it.

Therefore, we would send a number of letters with the same content.

I'll do that this time as well.

"What are you two going to do?"

"I'm going to do a Goblin Subjugation job!"

In response to my question, Eris gave that response.

"Goblin?"

If you were to say Goblin, then it would be that Goblin I guess.

About half the size of a person and wielding a club and equipment, yellow-green skin color, a high virility, and they would almost always come out in fantasy-type ero games, working until they fulfil their role of attacking the characters.

"I just heard in the city that Goblins appear around this area. If I'm an adventurer I have to make sure I see some Goblins!"

Eris said that full of energy.

Goblins are almost a rat-like existence in this world.

Strong ability to breed and always causing trouble for people.

For the most part they are capable of speech so you could consider them one class of magic beast, even though they can speak they still just move based on instinct increasing in numbers until someone exterminates them.

"I understand. Ruijerd, will you be guarding?"

"I'll be fine on my own against Goblins!"

In response to my words Eris raised her voice.

It was a face that took offense to what I said.

I thought about it.

Eris is strong.

In terms of rank Goblins are on the level of an E-rank monster.

There were none on the Magic Continent so I've never actually seen them, but the danger should be low.

It's an opponent a child with just a bit of sword experience should be able to defeat.

In comparison, Eris can fight equally with B-rank monsters.

I guess forcing Ruijerd to follow along in this situation is being a bit too overprotective?

No, but... if a female adventurer is defeated by Goblins it's a straight path to a slave of the flesh.

I don't know much about the Goblins in this world, but the Goblins in my world were almost all something along those lines.

If I was a Goblin and somehow or other managed to knock Eris unconscious...

I would definitely start living a very fulfilling Goblin lifestyle from there on out.
Anyone would.
I would.



I think for the most part it will be alright.
However...
Although...
If the moment I take my eyes off Eris something like that were to happen, I wouldn't have it in me to face Ghyslaine and Philip.

"Rudeus. It's alright. Let her try it."

While I was thinking about it Ruijerd came with the lifeboat.

How rare.

During this past year and a half, Ruijerd has lectured Eris on fighting all sorts of monsters.

I had a hard time understanding the teaching method, but Eris properly learned it.

If that's the case, then it's alright, I guess.

"I understand then. Eris, even if the opponent is weak make sure you don't let your guard down."

"Of course!"

"Make sure you do your preparations properly as well."

"I know that!"

"If it seems dangerous, run like the wind."

"I said I know!"

"In the worst case scenario, grab your opponents hands and yell in a loud voice 'This person is a molester!'".

"You're being annoying! Even I can manage a Goblin Subjugation!"

I made her angry.

I'm still quite worried, but let's believe in the experienced warrior Ruijerd here.

"In that case I won't say anything more. Give it your best."

"Yeah, I'll give it my all!"

Eris nodded with a satisfied expression.

"Then, Ruijerd what are you going to do?"

"I'm going to visit an acquaintance."

That's the first time I've heard the words acquaintance from Ruijerd.

"Oh, an acquaintance? Even Ruijerd has acquaintances?"

"Of course."

I thought he was always alone though...

Well I guess if you were to live for 500 years you'd have at least one or two acquaintances.

Why here in this city of Milishion is what I was thinking, but conversely in a city this large, it's very possible Ruijerd would have an acquaintance here.

"What kind of acquaintance?"

"A warrior."

Another warrior, huh.

Since that's the case then it would be another person he saved along the way on the Magic Continent I guess.

Well, I won't pry too much.

It's not like I'm his parent, it would be unrefined to ask all about who he's meeting on a day off after all.

Part 6

Next day, Eris and Ruijerd left separately.

I as well went out to buy paper, a pen, and ink in the city.

While I'm at it I also planned to investigate the market prices of Holy Milis Kingdom.

In terms of food, it's quite a bit cheaper than the Magic Continent.

The quality was so high as well the Magic Continent was not even worthy of comparison.

There was all sorts of fresh meat and fish lined up, happily even raw vegetables were being sold.

The thing that surprised me the most was the eggs.

Chicken eggs were being sold at an extremely cheap price.

Fresh eggs, they were eggs that were literally just laid today.

On the Magic Continent you could find eggs being sold every so often.

However, they weren't eggs from chickens, but magic beasts.

They were made use of in combination with imprinting, and then the magic beasts were trained.

Obviously, they weren't intended for food purposes.

They weren't at such a cheap price that you could fry them on a whim.

Incidentally, there are poultry in this world.

Even in Buena Village there was a person who had chickens.

To be more accurate, it's a bird that looks very similar to chickens.

It seems raising poultry is quite common in Milis.

It's been a while since I've been overcome with the desire to eat raw eggs mixed with rice.

TKG.

Tamago kake gohan.^[4]

It's a perfect and complete food.

However, there's no soy sauce to go with the rice.

I tried searching the market just to check, but it seems like there's nothing similar.

Just like Asura Kingdom, it seems the staple food of Holy Milis Kingdom is bread as well.

Although I've already confirmed that rice exists in this world.

The places where rice is a staple are the Northern and Eastern parts of the Central Continent.

It was written in one of Roxy's letters that rice could be found in Shiron Kingdom as well.

Mixing meat, vegetables, and a variety of fish with rice into something like a paella is the mainstream method supposedly.

However... but...

There's supposedly no poultry industry in that area.

Whether it be because of the climate or they just don't have any chickens, in any case, eggs are almost never found there.

Even more so there's nothing that's similar to soy sauce.

In the plant dictionary there is something that looks a lot like the soy bean, but it seems there's been no experiments in trying to let that ferment and turn into a sauce.

Although if you search there could be some somewhere.

Eggs and rice exist after all.

I will make sure I will one day obtain it with these hands.

Then I will eat it, tamago kake gohan.

I'm not really paying much mind to the sanitation of the eggs.

Even if you were to get sick you could just cure it using healing magic after all.

Part 7

After investigating the market prices I returned to the inn while thinking about what I'm going to write for the contents of the letters.

If I think about it, this will be the first time I've sent a letter to Paul and Sylphy.

I wonder if I should start writing from the time at the Boreas House.

No, more than that reporting that we're still alive is the most important.

It would be fine as long as we tell them we were teleported to the Magic Continent.

If I think about it a lot of stuff has happened.

Traveling together with a Supard race, meeting the Great Demon Emperor, spending three months or so at the Beast race village.... I wonder if they'll believe it.

At the very least, the fact that I met the Great Demon Emperor and was given Demon Eyes would be something pretty unbelievable normally.

Whether they believe it or not, it's a matter of fact that it happened.

Speaking of the Beast race village, I wonder if Ghyslaine is alright.

Since she's that strong, unless she ends up being teleported to some strange place, she's most likely okay.

I'm sure everyone in the Boreas family is worried as well.

Philip, Sauros, Hilda.

As well as the butler Alphonse, and all the maids.

No matter where old man Sauros gets thrown I'm sure he would be energetically letting out a loud voice.

While I'm thinking about this I enter a short alley.

In Milishion there are a number of these short alleyways.

If you were to draw a map when it was new it would probably look like a pretty Go board, but after a long period of destroying and re-building houses of all sizes, it slowly started to shift, and that's how these short and tight alleyways were created.

Although, maybe it's because they were lined up like a Go board, there's no real worry about getting lost.

Therefore, I went through a different route to return to the inn.

Maybe I can find some good date spots around here.

The red-haired one from our place is just a little bit violent, though as long as she puts on something proper she actually looks quite pretty, if we're to stay here for a month then we might have a chance for a date.

If it comes down to that then I'll have to make a plan and make sure to take her to a great place and give her a good impression.

Just as I was thinking that, I saw five men coming in my direction in a hurry through a small alley.

They weren't adventurer types.

If I were to say it, they would be hoodlums from the city.

They were wearing clothes intending to intimidate.

If you were to put it into a single word it would be, young.

However, I can't think well of them when several adult males enter this kind of small alley. Roads are made for compromise.

Even if I am a child and on the small side, if you enter this alley as well as side

by side we'll eventually run into each other.

This is a time to be like the heinous delinquent leader (Emi), and glare at them one by one to signal a mutual compromise?

"Move!"

I meekly stuck to the wall.

No, please don't misunderstand.

I just like to avoid unnecessary conflict.

It seems like they're in a hurry as well, and I'm not in a hurry.

It's not particularly like I avoided them because I'm DQN-ish.^[5]

For the most part?

It's not a lie.

Also, you know, you can't make decisions based on people's appearance.

They looked like hoodlums, but one of them could be a well-known swordsman.

If I was not being careful of my opponents and just started using violence, then if all of a sudden they were actually Young Noble of Madness, [Dead End].

Something like that could happen.

Considering this is a world where you could find a Great Demon Emperor little girl starving in an alley in the middle of nowhere after all.

Yeah.

It's better to avoid unnecessary conflict.

Is what I was thinking but...

The moment I was about to pass by them I noticed the two in the center had a large bag.

Two of them both carrying it side by side.

Then I noticed a small hand sticking out of the bag.

More than likely there is a child within that bag.

[Another human kidnapping, huh.]

There really are a lot of kidnappings in this world.

The moment criminals see an opening they just up and kidnap children.

In Asura Kingdom, in Magic Continent, in Great Forest, in Holy Milis Kingdom, they'll really just start kidnapping just about anywhere.

According to Gisu, kidnapping and abduction is rather profitable.

Currently, there is a bit of strife here and there, but it is largely peaceful, the number of slaves that make it to the central and north areas of Central Continent are rather small.

However, the number of people who want slaves is large.

Especially in rich countries like Asura Kingdom and Holy Milis Kingdom.

In other words it's a matter of supply and demand.

If you kidnap someone you'll be able to sell them for a high price.

Which is why kidnappings never end.

It's the truth.

About the only way to wipe out kidnappings would be for a large scale war to break out.

Then.... but... it's a child, huh.

If they've got five people together to transport her then it should be something they planned ahead to do.

That would mean the one inside the bag is most likely the daughter or son of some noble or rich merchant.

Honestly, I don't really want to get involved.

If I try to save the child, I might end up being mistaken as one of the culprits and thrown into a jail.

That kind of bitter experience just happened only a few months prior.

Then, guess I should just ignore them?

No, I can't do that.

The fact that kidnapping will never end in this world and the fact that I experienced something bitter previously are all a different story.

[Dead End] Rule number one.

Never abandon children.

[Dead End] Rule number two.

Absolutely never abandon children.

[Dead End] are allies of justice.

Defeating all bad guys without a doubt.

Rescuing all the children.

Just like that bit by bit we can spread the name of the Supard race.

I followed after the five people.

Part 8

My spying skill seems to have leveled up.

I wonder if it's because I trained in order to spy on Eris and the other girls in the Dorudia Village.

The five men never noticed me trailing them and entered a single warehouse.

What careless guys.

Well, if you want to find me you better train your nose.

If you learn to smell the scent of arousal, you'll find me in an instant.

The location of the warehouse was in a shady part of the Adventurers District.

It was even further back than the inn we were staying in.

There was no main road attached to it, the only way to enter is going down one of the small alleys.

Obviously a cart wouldn't be able to get to it and since the road is small you wouldn't be able to carry any large baggage either.

It almost makes me want to call those responsible and ask why they would build a warehouse in a place like this.

It's sitting in the middle of that kind of Dead Space.

Most likely the warehouse was built first, then the surrounding buildings were built afterwards.

I confirmed that the men went inside and then went around the back.

Using earth magic I elevated myself off the ground.

Then I entered through a window intending to observe the warehouse.

I went into the center, hid myself in a wooden box, then started to confirm the situation.

The five were talking about this and that.

It seems that most of their allies are in the bar next door.

I heard them say something like the job is done and to go call someone.

I guess I should take care of things before they call their allies, or maybe confirm the face of their allies first from above, then just save the child.

Naturally I would choose the latter.

Since that is the case, I'll be on standby in this wooden box for a bit.

However, since it was dark I couldn't confirm, but what in the world is being stored in this wooden box?

It seems to be some kind of cloth.

I understand that much but it's a bit small to be clothing.

Though, when I'm surrounded by it like this, for some odd reason I feel quite relaxed.

I'll try holding one in my hand.

This sensation and shape is one I have experienced before.

A solidly sewn cloth that has three holes in it.

One piece of cloth became twenty two and then I started to feel an amazing unknown something.

"These are panties!"

"Who's there?"

Cr...Crap!

I've been found.

Damn it. For them to prepare this kind of trap. What foul play.

"Inside of the wooden box?"

"Come out!"

"Hey, call the leader and others."

This is bad.

If I wait around any longer they'll call for their allies.

Change of plans.

I'll just quickly save the child and then quickly run away. Yes, let's go with that.

However, my face will be seen.

No, there's no problem there. There's a mask in my hand.

Fuoooo!

I'm feeling ecstasy!

Not really though.

I thought about wrapping my face in my robe to hide my identity but, after giving it some thought I left it to do some shopping, I'm not even wearing my robe, and I don't have my staff as well.

"Uooo!"

"He....He's wearing panties on his head..."

"A pervert..."

While the two men were taken back I went with an entrance performance.

"Within the intervals of power vs power, you who attempt to satisfy your unsightly desires, feel ashamed of your actions!! People, call that, the fiendish way!"

"Wh-who are you bastard!"

"Ruijerd of Dead End!"

"What? Dead End?"

Ah, oh no, damn it.

I just named myself out of habit.

This was where I was supposed to say "I have no name to give to people like you".

Sorry about that, Ruijerd-san.

From today on you are now a pervert who wears panties on his face while saving people!

However, I will properly save the child!

"Kidnapping bastards! It's your fault that a single man is currently undergoing false accusations! I definitely cannot forgive you!"

"Hey kid, if you want to play allies of justice go do it elsewhere. We are you know..."

"No forgiveness! Sunrise Attack~!"

"Guge!"

For the time being I fired off a rock bullet.

After all the first to strike wins.

If I think back to it, I took out the pervert lolicon old man in a single hit from behind like this when he was about to attack the Great Demon Emperor as well.

"Here, here!"

"Ge!"

"Ugo!"

In no time at all four of them were knocked unconscious.

I rushed over to the child.

"Are you alright boy! Is what I was thinking, but you're unconscious..."

It seems like a young boy I've seen somewhere before.

Really, I have some memory of him.

Huh?

Where was it again.

I can't remember.

Well it's fine. I don't have the time to spare on things like this.

If I don't hurry the enemies' reinforcements will come.

Just as I was thinking that men just kept appearing one after another.

"Uo! Everyone was knocked out!"

"He's a kid but don't go easy, quickly call the leader and others over!"

"The leader is out drinking today!"

"He's strong even when he's drunk!"

Two of them left and hurried outside.

There's already ten of them, but it seems like even more reinforcements will come.

This is bad.

Very bad.

After all maybe abandoning him would have been the better choice.

Otherwise, consulting with Ruijerd tomorrow.

I've screwed up.

There's already no option other than to defeat them all and break through.

"What a guy, he's wearing panties on his face."

"Could it be he came here to steal the panties!"

"That would mean he's the enemy of all women!?"

If I look carefully there's several women mixed in with them.

Sorry, Ruijerd.

Really, sorry.

I started the battle while apologizing earnestly in my heart.

Fortunately they were not very strong.

If they attempted to run or get close I would counter attack with a rock bullet.

They couldn't avoid it at all and more or less fainted with a single shot.

They weren't wielding any weapons and none of them were using magic either.

It's an easy victory.

"Do-don't get close to him."

"What is that, is he using some sort of magic item!?"

"Is the leader still not here!?"

After about half of them passed out the remaining ones started to get restless.

If it's like this then I can do it, or just as I was thinking that.

"Ah, sorry for the wait."

The reinforcements appeared.

It really was a pretty quick arrival.

Though I guess that's obvious since they were supposedly in the bar next door.

Five people with a sharp demeanor came out.

They were standing with leisure in front of the warehouse entrance.

The leader seems like a man I think I've seen before.

His face gives off a nostalgic feeling.

However, once again I can't remember.

Rather than that, the older sister behind him is more important.

Bikini bitch^[6].

They aren't really all that rare in this world, but the amount of exposure this one has going is exceedingly high.

In the Magic Continent there weren't any women with this much exposure around.

The other woman was wearing her robe tightly and for some reason only her expression was a bit different.

"Cheh, you've really been doing whatever you like here. Hicku... you guys don't lay your hands on him. No need to surround a single kid with large numbers, I'll do it myself."

The man seemed to have confidence in his skills but he was staggering all over the place.

Even from far I could tell his face was red from drinking alcohol.

However, it really is a face I've seen somewhere before...

Brown hair, foolish looking, looks a little bit like Paul.

The voice is exactly like Paul's as well.

Though it looks similar, it doesn't look like Paul at all at the same time.

If Paul were totally worn out and all of his usual flexibility gone, I wonder if it would end up like that.

Somehow it's a face which makes it really hard to attack him.

"You bastard, you've really been doing as you please to my group members, you better have prepared yourself!"

The man went into battle mode while talking big and pulled out two swords.

Nitoryu, huh.^[7]

He's most likely an advanced-level swordsman.

I wonder if I will be able to manage with rock bullet?

No, but, I don't really want to kill him...

The man came charging at me as I was hesitating.

I fell one move behind.

I fired off a rock bullet on reflex.

The man's reaction was faster.

He repelled the rock bullet with the sword in his right hand.

"Water God Style!"

"That's not all!"

The man stepped in.

I reflexively fired off a shock wave and flew backwards.

"Hee!!"

"Oh!"

Using my foresight I was able to see ahead and avoid it.

The speed of the mans sword was fast.

Though his legs were still pretty unsteady.

Probably because he's drunk.

If it's like this I can probably manage somehow.

"Cheh, that guy is moving as if he can see it...! Vera! Shera! Lend me a hand!"

The bikini bitch and magician-like women stepped forward.

The bikini bitch came up from my side, then started an incantation.

This is bad.

The man's attacks were severe.

I was giving my best just to avoid them.

Though I still have some options left.

"Wa!!"

"Ugh!!"

I used voice magic and stopped the man's movements for an instant.

Simultaneously I created a shock wave and sent the man flying and fired a rock bullet as well.

Furthermore, when the bikini bitch came in to attack me, I used foresight to hit her with a counter.

I hit the magician with a rock bullet when she was focused on the incantation and knocked her unconscious.

I hit the bikini and she fell backwards, it seems she's still fine, her eyes were sparkling as she was glaring at me.

Then the man came to attack.

"Shera! You bastard!"

When the man stepped in to attack I created a bog to interfere with his movement.

The man's leg completely got caught in the bog and he fell in an unsightly way.

"Leader!"

You shouldn't look away.

Is something I didn't put into words, I just silently fired off a rock bullet.

The bikini fainted.

"Vera! Damn it!"

The man put one of his swords back into its scabbard then he put the other sword into his mouth.

Foresight.

[He's running on his arms and legs]

Is this guy a dog.

I start to move backwards while firing off a rock bullet to counter attack.

However, this is a small warehouse.

There's nothing I can use to keep him from getting closer.

"Uooohra!"

He jumped up from all fours while twisting his body.

While in the middle of a movement similar to that of a beast, he pulled the sword on his hip.

His movements are sharp.

Even from such an odd stance, he can make his body appear smaller or larger as he pulls his sword.

[Simultaneously, he dropped the sword he was holding in his mouth into his left hand and switched directions, a surprise attack.]

An original attack.

He's going beyond my predictions.

If I didn't have this foresight, I most likely wouldn't have been able to avoid this.

His attack just barely grazed the tip of my nose.

There was a slightly tingling pain in my nose.

"..."

My heart started beating really fast.

I wasn't thinking about trying to kill the man.

However, he is trying to kill me.

I just realized that obvious fact.

If I don't get serious I'll be killed.

After thinking that I lowered my hips.

I remember back to my training with Ruijerd and Eris.

The man's beast like movements, if I were to compare them, they are movements that are similar to Ruijerd when he gets serious.

However, this man doesn't carry his body as well as Ruijerd does.

It's just an eccentric movement.

I should be able to do it.

The next time he comes with a counter...

Just as I was thinking that, I realized the man's movements had stopped.

After taking a look around I realized the panties I had been using to hide my face had fallen to the ground.

This is bad my face was seen?

"Are you Rudi...?"

Rudi.

There is only one man who would call me by that name.

Then that dumbfounded voice, mixed with anger, wasn't a drunk voice, but something I was used to hearing.

"...Father?"



The first meeting with Paul Greyrat in a while, his cheeks had sunken in quite a bit, there were bags under his eyes, his face was unshaven, hair unkempt, his breath smelled of alcohol, and his entire body was slumped over.

It looked nothing like the Paul in my memories.

Notes

1. Dumplings over flowers, proverb showing more realistic interests more than aesthetic.
2. Translating danna to master doesn't sound good here, Gisu uses really rude/familiar/rogue-ish speech in general, this is one such case referring to Ruijerd.
3. Can also be translated as [Sunrise Inn]
4. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamago_kake_gohan
5. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DQN>
6. Literally bikiniama, ironically ama has double meaning for both nun and bitch.
7. Nitoryu: two sword/dual wielding style though this one is pretty commonly heard.

Chapter 45 - Paul 1.5 Years Later

Part 1

Paul

When I woke up, I had realized I was in the middle of a meadow in a grassland.

It was a grassland.

There was no other words to describe it other than 'grassland'.

It was nothing more than a completely ordinary piece of grassland with nothing particular about it, but strangely, it had about a sense of familiarity.

I spent a few minutes trying to figure out where this was.

I remembered.

This was the southern part of Asura Kingdom.

It's near the town I once stayed in.

During that time, I was learning the Water God Style swordsmanship in the town.

In other words, it was close to Lilia's home.

I thought this was a dream. It was only natural to think so.

Even so, it was quite the nostalgic place.

How many years did I live here? One year, or was it two?

I only remembered that it was not a very long time.

My memories mostly only included those of the dojo. I remembered the senior disciple.

He was a despicable guy.

A person who only knew how to run off his mouth.

He was a bastard who fiercely drummed the threat into my head that it was not my right to go beyond him once he saw my talent.

I hate those type of senior-junior and superior-inferior relationships.

I had run away from home because I had to hold my head down to my father as well.

Still, my father was better compared to him. How do I explain this, it was because he possessed power.

However, that senior of mine did not possess any power at all.

He was merely a small fry that had developed immense narcissism by running off his mouth.

When I had trained to reach the intermediate level, that guy was still hanging around at the end of the beginner level.

That was a guy of low caliber.

Even within the main dojo, that was their best of the senior Water God Style swordsmen.

They just kept coming up with different excuses with how their lack of competence was caused by this or that.

I had thought that someday I will show the true strength of my power to those guys.

Although, at the very end, I wasn't able to show that guy my own strength at all.

There were many things I wasn't able to put up with. Like the crime I had committed against Lilia, so I ran away.

I had more or less aimed at this from the beginning, the fact that I had wanted to trample on what was considered precious to them.

Those guys started to look for me in a frenzy ever since I fled.

I left the country in order to ridicule them.

When I think back on it, I realized I was a kid back then.

How that senior disciple acted did not matter, the fact was that I did a bad thing to Lilia.

".....nn"

The wind blew.

Dust entered my eyes and I frowned.

Then, the side of the hem of my clothing was pulled.

"Dad...where, is this...?"

"Un?"

Looking closely, Norn was clinging tightly to my chest.

She was looking at me with an anxious face.

So finally, I let go of my house coat, and noticed I was standing on the prairie.

The soles of my feet were feeling the texture of the ground clearly.

The warmth of Norn.

This was not a dream.

"...What's with this?"

I do not understand why I was here.

If I was alone then I would have thought it was a dream to the end.

However, there was Norn clinging to my chest.

Norn born three years ago.

Tiny Norn.

My cute daughter.

I rarely come into contact with my daughters.

Since I was hoping to become a strict father, I usually avoid physical contact with them.

So why would I be embracing Norn...?

...Oh right.

I remember.

Just until awhile ago, I was talking to Zenith at home.

It was just a talk about nothing special.

"As our daughters grow bigger, they'll start to resist contact with their fathers,

so it's alright for you to stop holding back, just for now."

"No, no, I am aiming to become a dignified father. Unlike Rudeus, Norn seems to be more mundane, so I'll have to be more aware of how I act as a father now."

"So it's not like you dislike her after all then."

"...Yeah, then I'll hug her after all... "

It was such a conversation.

Nearby, Lilia was teaching Aisha something.

Lilia was going to let Aisha go through specialized education.

I opposed her saying that we should let them grow more freely but I was strongly overpowered by Lilia.

Aisha was growing quickly.

Anything taught was memorized immediately, just as how she also learned how to walk quite fast.

So.

It was at that time that, abruptly, I was wrapped in a bright light.

Oh, I remembered.

The memory continued.

.....That something seems to have happened, I instantaneously realized it.

".....Dad?"

Norn raised her anxious voice as she looks at my face.

"It's all right."

I gently stroked Norn's head.

Then I looked over my surroundings.

There were no signs of Lilia or Zenith.

Whether they were nearby, or if I was the only one blown away, Norn was together with me.

Why I wonder?

...I remember.

In the labyrinths, there was one time where I was caught in some atrocious trap.

It seems to have been some sort of teleportation magic that we had triggered.

It was lucky of me that I had been transported to somewhere close at that time.

Elinalize at that time had grabbed onto the hem of my clothes and was fuming.

It was the sort of trap that spells instant death if you were unlucky.

The monkey scout that had been caught up in the trap was never found... Such a story doesn't matter.

In summary, only the person that was in contact with you during that instant would get teleported with you.

This was why Norn was with me.

However, why?

Why has such a thing happened?

It's way too abrupt.

Whose handiwork was this?

There were many enemies around me.

It wouldn't be strange for whoever it was to do it.

However, this was teleportation.

Teleportation is another story.

There was no casting used for the teleportation magic.

Therefore, items imbued with magic or magic products were used.

Teleportation-imbued magic items were considered to be illegal no matter where in the world.

The magic for teleportation was designated as a forbidden technique and has become long lost.

In order to take revenge on me, a single person, why was there a need to go through such lengths, through such a dangerous path?

Also, how come the place I was transported to was such a barren field?

No way.

A disciple of the dojo was one of the culprits involved?

A thought suddenly surfaced in my mind.

In order to get to Lilia, they had me moved.

This place I was at was supposed to be a hint.

By the time I return home, Lilia and Zenith might have already been sullied by a vulgar man.

Damn it, it seems to be an idea they would come up with.

"Hey, father."

"Norn, it's alright. We'll return home immediately."

As I kept murmuring that to myself, we headed towards the town.

Fortunately, in case where something were to happen, Asura gold coins were concealed inside the sheathe of the sword.

The sword was to always be worn at all times, which was a habit formed from my time as an adventurer.

It was not to be removed even when sleeping.

The only time it could be allowed to be removed was when feeling up a woman.

The adventurers' card was also placed within the sheathe.

It was for times like these.

I went to the Adventurers Guild in order to exchange the money.

Eight large copper coins and nine pieces of silver.

The commission fee was raised before I knew it.

Although this amount was plenty enough.

A quick check around the Adventurers Guild request board was made, and since there was a request for an urgent delivery, I immediately accepted it.

The lady at the reception desk updated the magical power to the adventurer card along with the accepted request.

After realizing the rank written on the card was S, she showed a surprised face.

The reason as to why she was shocked was not because S rank adventurers were rare but rather the fact that I had accepted such a quest.

Usually, such delivery quests can be accepted regardless of rank because of the urgency but it's still commonly considered as an E rank request.

Usually, I would not bother hiding the reason behind it but explaining it was troublesome so I didn't.

I readily held out one silver coin.

How many years had it been since I prepared for traveling?

It's been a long time but I still remembered clearly what was needed.

The preparations were finished in no time.

I had also rented out a horse from the Adventurers Guild.

I'm glad that there was a request for urgent delivery.

Of the many benefits of the S rank, renting out a free horse on such a request was one of them.

Of course, that didn't necessarily mean that I was going to return it immediately once the request was finished.

This time, I headed out in a different direction from the delivery.

I feel bad for the client, but I'm also in an emergency.

These horses that have been bought were definitely good ones for sure.

My luck was good.

This just goes to show how much of an emergency it was.

There could possibly be a chance of having my adventurer's status revoked for taking advantage of its benefits, but so be it.

I had not intended to continue living on as an adventurer in the first place.

Norn was placed on top of the horse and I jumped onto its back.

Immediately, we set off from the town.

Part 2

Norn became sick on the way.

I was in too much of a hurry.

Norn had absolutely no experience riding, even more so to have to continue moving throughout the day and night, even when she's still just a child.

Extra time was taken to nurse Norn, and so by the time we reached the Fedoa region, two months had already passed.

This was the number of days that it would've taken it if I had used the horse-drawn carriage in the first place.

Therefore, the delivery request had already been failed long ago.

The fine was not a big deal though.

Though, I was in despair.

Before we reached the village of Buina, I had already realized the gravity of the situation.

The entire Fedoa region had disappeared.

I had sunk in to the polar regions of confusion.

What had happened?

Where's the Buina village that I had known?

Zenith?

Lilia?

The walled city of Roa was not there anymore either.

Then, wouldn't that mean that Rudeus was gone as well?

Stupid...

Unknowingly, I had my knees fall onto the ground.

"Annihilation from the Teleportation trap."

Such words swirled inside my head.

The adventurer era.

I had heard many times about labyrinths, that the number one trap to be wary of was teleportation traps.

The party will fall apart without even knowing the location of their comrades.

It is one of the absolute worst traps that we shouldn't get caught up in.

I have heard many stories of parties that had been caught up in such a trap and most would end up wiped out.

If any parties were to be caught in such a trap, they should all find their way back to the entrance to rendezvous.

Otherwise, those that were unable to come out would most likely be dead.

Any men who would hear of such a story would end up with a stunned look on their faces.

But, surely.

In such a place like this.

I...

"Dad...we're still not home yet?"

With those words, I returned to reality.

My daughter of a mere three years old, had grabbed onto the hem of my clothes.

I silently hugged Norn.

"Dad? What is it?"

Yes.

I am a dad.

A father.

My daughter still doesn't know what had happened yet.

But, because of me, she can have peace of mind.

I am a dad.

A father.

Do not show any weaknesses.

I must retain a resolute attitude.

It is so.

Teleportation's a terrible trap indeed.

I do not know why we had ended up in such a situation.

But, I am alive.

Zenith was even a former adventurer as well.

Even Lilia, although not as strong as she used to be, could still use a sword.

Aisha...

I remember, at that time, at that moment, Lilia was in contact with Aisha right?

...I can't remember clearly.

No, do not give up.

At that time, Lilia was holding Aisha's hand.

Let us think that is true for now.

Part 3

While returning the borrowed horse to the nearest town, I tried to collect some information.

It seems that the disaster took place throughout the entire Fedoa region.

Sauros and Phillip are both missing, and his brother is the lord now.

But, it doesn't seem that Phillip's brother is going to take responsibility and intervene in the downfall of this disaster at any moment.

They're too concerned about themselves to bother lending a helping hand.

It seems, rather than to protect the people under one's own dominion, he would rather care about himself.

The Asura nobles are absolutely repugnant because of this.

While I was gathering information, an old man named Alphonse made contact with me.

He was the butler that had been serving under Phillip.

He had sworn allegiance towards the Greyrat house.

Even under such a situation, he did not harbor any other selfish thoughts of his own.

He had even used his own property in order to start the construction of refugee camps.

Alphonse had said that he wanted my help. When he heard me ask him [Why me?], he responded saying that he had heard about me from Phillip.

Phillip had said,

"He is a person who puts in effort the case of an emergency, but since he doesn't have the power to see ahead, he's an unreliable person that gets himself in trouble because of his own mistakes."

The story goes like that. That's none of your business.

Alphonse seemed to have been hesitant whether to attempt to contact me, but considering that I was Rudeus's father, he took up the chance to offer cooperation.

I was just following the conversation but became delighted that Rudeus has been evaluated so highly even by the house butler.

I willingly accepted and followed Alphonse's instructions.

Then one month passed.

Alphonse continuously borrows and collects volunteers as well as funds from various kinds of places while using them to expand the refugee camp.

What superb ability.

I, on the other hand, find and gather the lost people to the refugee camps while establishing and organizing the "Fedoa region's Search Group".

The network had spread to all places, trying to save those that had turned into refugees.

However, my purpose was not to save strangers, but to help to find my family.

By that time, the power attained over the place was large enough to be compared to a king and Alphonse was gaining steady funds for the reconstruction of the camps.

I left a note in the refugee camps, saying I was aiming for and heading to the

Holy Milis Kingdom's headquarters, the Adventurers Guild.

Milis and Asura, if I was able to successfully connect these two then information could easily be obtained between them.

This was the judgment I had made.

Anyone and everyone would easily be found.

That was what I had thought at that time.

I was too naive.

Part 4

Half of a year's time has passed while I was active in Milis.

A considerable number of people had been transported to the Milis Continent.

All of them were rescued, one after another.

Some within the group were sold as slaves.

I had decided to save them all.

It's said that if you were to free slaves by force, you would end up going against the Milis Kingdom's law.

But, Zenith and Lilia could have possibly ended up as slaves as well.

If that were to be the case, then there's no need for any hesitation even if it were to be a crime.

I will save them all.

I kept that sort of attitude.

That way, in any sort of situation, I will remember what am I doing is for a just cause.

I do not allow any sort of precedent or reason to sway my decision.

Thinking about that, I realized that I could rely on Zenith's house.

Zenith's family is a house of powerful nobles in the Milis Kingdom.

Prestigious and known to have bore many excellent knights.

I made a commitment to rely on them.

The refugee rescue was advancing nicely as well.

Thanks to the early start of the movement, many of the people in need of help

were found immediately.

Many of those from the Fedoa region had indeed been teleported over to the Milis Continent.

Those that had to go back by foot were given travel expenses in order to assist them.

The elderly and children that the Fedoa Region Search Group had found were provided with a place to rest.

Those that had become slaves also needed gold to purchase back their freedom, along with the power of the Zenith family.

If all else were to fail, then we would resort to looking for a chance to kidnap them back.

Of course, a problem surfaced.

The Milis Kingdom's nobles became aware of the fact that I was the one in charge of the recent disappearance and stealing slaves, and so many sent their own private armies to attack me.

Many members ended up dead because of that, but I did not stop.

What we were doing were justified.

We were right in saving people, and so the search group continued to follow me.

I used the status of a senior noble of the Asura Kingdom's Greyrat family, the house of Zenith and the fact that I was a former Adventurer in order to solve our problems.

However, not even one single piece of information of Lilia or Zenith came to me.

Not to mention, the same went for Rudeus as well.

That son of mine, wherever he would be, he would still stand out with overflowing information and rumors, but unfortunately, it did not enter my network at all.

Part 5

One year had passed.

It became a year in no time at all.

At this point in time the reports of discoveries become quite varied and confusing, as well as more infrequent than before.

There are those that were found to be roughly in the middle of the Milis continent and the central southern continent.

There are still some villagers who have still not yet been found, and others are still trapped as slaves.

To this degree, the liberation of the slaves was proceeding according to plan.

The first priority is to secure custody of them, even if it required using brute force.

I also realized that this is an abomination to many of the nobles, so much so that they can't turn a blind eye towards us.

The situation worsened due to the fact that many of our members were attacked and either killed or seriously injured.

There are even some members who blamed me for it.

We could have done better, not to mention I didn't expect us to be in such a situation.

Even so, my attitude did not change.

It's too late to afford a change.

Recently, more reports of discovery of refugees' deaths have come up.

They weren't that recent or ambiguous.

There have been many death reports since the beginning.

To be frank, the reports of death were more overwhelming than those of survivors.

Eto, Chloe, Rawls, Bonnie, Lane, Marion, Montie...

Every single time I hear the death report of an acquaintance, my spine goes cold.

There were some who broke down from the reports.

There were also those who we were one step behind from preventing their suicide.

There were others who ended up blaming me, asking why didn't I look into that place sooner.

Each and every time, I grew into an even more desolate mood.

Then, as time flows by, even the death reports became ambiguous.

The person might be dead.

A corpse of that looked like that person might have been found.

In the depths of the forest, someone could have seen someone who looks like that person.

When I thought about it more clearly, the actions we have taken have ended up as vain effort for way too many.

Information about my family still did not come up.

I thought that I might have failed.

We should have looked into the magic continent and the northern part of the central continent.

If they had become slaves in those places, then they might still be alive.

What could have been put off should have been put off.

The first choice should have been to search within those dangerous places.

No, impossible.

Most members of the search team were not suited to fighting.

The majority of them were the original town's farmers.

Some of them were adventurers but they were too few in number and of those that I had known, I had sent them to suitable places.

For the rest of the members of the Fedoa Region's Search Group, if they were to be sent to the northern part of the Magic continent, the Central Continent, and the Begaritto Continent, they wouldn't be able to stand in the midst of battle.

Those sent to rescue would need rescuing.

Therefore, my choice was not wrong.

Thanks to the decisions I had made, I was able to save thousands of refugees.

Or perhaps, if I was able to make contact with those of "Fangs of the Black Wolf", I would have been able to search the Begaritto Continent and the Magic Continent as well.

Unfortunately, I was only able to get in touch with a single person.

Also, that one person whom after I had made contact with once, I no longer knew where he was or what he was doing.

I do not think that they were cold-hearted guys.

The relationship between us was bad originally, and I also had a big fight with them during our parting.

It was the worst farewell ever.

It would not be strange even if they were to still have a grudge against me.

Why in the past did I make that kind of farewell?

I know, it was because I was a kid.

That being said, I cannot begin to regret now.

Part 6

A year and a half has passed.

These days, the amount I'm drinking has increased.

It has become a fact that I am unable to do anything unless I resort to alcohol.

I'm drinking from morning till night.

There's no time when I'm sober.

Even while I think I should not be like this when I wake up in the middle of the night, whatever I do becomes completely useless.

I would have thoughts that my family has died.

What was their death like, what became of their corpses?

All I would end up thinking of were such things.

After all, even with that excellent son of mine, I still had not heard of even one thing of him ever since the disaster.

I do not want to think.

I do not want to think, and even possibly consider their deaths.

Surely everyone during this one and a half years was waiting for my help and then ended up dying in tears.

When I think about that, I almost become mad.

Why am I in such a place?

Out of all the possible choices, it would have been best if I had started looking in the most dangerous places.

Even at worst, I alone could have somehow worked it out.

Any mistake in my decisions contributes directly to those who had died, those that could have been saved but weren't.

Those that we hold dear to us, those who were the most important to us, were mercilessly taken away.

Rather than wanting to believe it, I drink away my sorrows.

Only when I was drunk was I happy.

I was unable to do any work at all.

Six months later, the plan to return all of those found in the Milis Continent back to the Fedoa region begins.

I just can't move those who were ill, the women, the children, and the elderly recklessly like that.

There are people that cannot withstand the long trip even if there was a gold coin each for their travel expenses.

But we have hope with us as well as the will to return home.

Those of us within the Fedoa Region's Search Group escorted them back to Fedoa.

While the plan was progressing, even though I was responsible for them, I did not participate at all in the meetings, and instead I just drank all day.

All of the key members, including me, remained in Milis.

But in the end, the searching activities were reduced.

Two years.

The search movement will stop after two years.

While I think that it is still too early, there were others who thought that this was it.

Even if we were to search more, we would just be wasting money in vain.

In the end, I wasn't able to find even one family member.

Such a useless man.

Why in the world was I so useless?

Always a mere kid, not fit to be an adult even to the ends of time.

The team's members all started to take a step's distance away from me who was now always drunk and filled with the smell of booze.

This was natural.

No one would want to be acquainted with such a fool of a man who only drinks all day.

However there were some exceptions, one of which was Norn.

"Dad! Just a moment ago, a huge man was there."

Even when I was this drunk, Norn would still talk to me so joyfully.

Norn.

For me, Norn is my only family now.

She's my most important person in the entire world.

To me, there is only Norn.

Right.

I didn't even go to the Begaritto Continent or Magic Continent.

This was because of the presence of Norn.

My daughter who's only four years old right now, how could I abandon her?

Why should I leave her behind and go to such a dangerous place where I might die?

"Oh? What is it Norn? Have you encountered anything fun?"

"Yeah! When I almost fell into the ditch awhile ago, a bald person helped me! So, this! I got this!"

While saying that, Norn held up what was in her hands happily.

It was an apple. A red apple. A most appetizing color indeed.

"I see, that's good. Did you thank him properly?"

"Yes, I said 'Thank you'. The bald uncle then stroked my head!"

"I see, I see. A good person. But, you shouldn't go calling him bald since it might bother him."

Conversations with my daughter were always fun.

Norn's my treasure.

If there was anyone who would dare lay a hand on her, I would be ready to go against the entire Milis Kingdom.

It was at that time when I was thinking about that...

"Leader, it's very bad!"

One of my team members jumped into my room.

Interrupting a conversation with my precious daughter, I was feeling a little

cranky.

If it was like always, I would just reply back at him while yelling my lungs off.

However, with my daughter besides me, my pride held me back.

"What's the matter?"

"I was doing the work you assigned to me when we were attacked!"

"Attacked?"

They were attacked.

By whom?

It must be those damn nobles.

We told to them that those under the Asura Kingdom's dominion were wrongfully forced into slavery after the disaster.

Even so, they did not budge nor hand them over, those greedy bastards.

That was the story today, they sent people over to take their slaves back.

"All right, everyone, quickly get equipped. Let's go!"

For now, we called out for everyone to gather together.

They weren't a bunch of powerful fighters but it wasn't like their opponents were strong adventurers that have fought through labyrinths.

They should be able to at least fight neck to neck with them.

While they gather, I headed off to where the problem had occurred.

The place should be close by, where I can immediately jump in.

The Search Team's secret headquarters were a bunch of old warehouses where clothing and other sorts of items were stored.

It was a place someone was bound to discover.

This is bad. It may be necessary to change the base.

"Mr. Paul, the enemy is only one but he is strong, be careful."

"...he uses a sword?"

"No, it's a magician. Probably a kid, but he has his face covered."

A magician brat...

Possibly an amateur, though with that said, how would he defeat us with so many adults as his opponents?

It would probably be someone from the Dwarf race.

With a small stature like a child, he can easily fool us into thinking he's a mere kid.

An opponent of the dwarf race.

Even drunk, I should still be able to win.

I am confident that I wouldn't be defeated by these mere thugs, but...

Nope, there's no problem.

I have more than enough options in terms of fighting abilities.

Thinking so, I continued on to the warehouse.

Chapter 46 - Parent and Child Fight

Part 1

The inn Paul was staying at was the 『Dawn of the Door Inn』. Next door is a slightly larger than usual inn.

Inside is a circular wooden table with ten seats. I sit on one of them. Paul is sitting in front of me.

Though it's still the daytime, all the seats are filled up. The guys I knocked out were healed by some healing magician allies of Paul, and they were sitting around as well. It goes without saying, but the looks they were giving me weren't particularly good. It seems that everyone here is Paul's companion.

The one I notice in particular is the person behind Paul. Sitting there is a female warrior. Her hair is short and chest-nut colored, curling outwards.^[1] Her lips are a bit pouty^[2] and she gives a charming impression. Worthy of special mention is her figure. Large breasts, a slim waist, and a full butt, covered up by the so-called bikini armor. She's a girl in her late teens.

Indeed, it's the female warrior that Paul called Vera.

Even with with one look, I can tell that she's got the kind of figure that Paul is fond of.

That bikini armor isn't very unusual in this world. It's a world where a small wound can easily be fixed with healing magic. Assuming that they'd just block attacks, they'd prefer light weight armors. Things like chainmail would get in the way. There are a lot of swordsmen who think this way. It's likely that she's one of them.

Still, it's the first time I've seen someone so lightly dressed. Normally above some thin clothing they'd wear armor on their joints, like their shoulders and elbows. Even if she isn't dressed that way because we're in a bar, she could have worn an overcoat or something. At the very least, the young women I've seen up

until now on the Demon Continent were like that. Isn't she cold in a get-up like that?

I've heard that because of the 7 towers in Milis, the climate is always stable here. I wonder if that's why she's fine? Well, let's just assume so for now. It's eye-pleasing.

While I'm looking at her, our eyes suddenly meet.

I was winked at.

I returned the wink.

"Oi, Rudi... Rudi?"

When Paul speaks to me, the female warrior and I break off our gazes.

"Father, it's been a while."

"What, Rudi... you survived, huh?"^[3]

Paul spoke with a tired voice. How do I say this... he's really changed.

He hasn't shaved properly, his hair is a mess, his breath reeks of alcohol, and his whole body gives off a peevish impression.

He doesn't look at all like the Paul in my memories.

"Well... yeah..."

At any rate, my mind can't keep up.

Why is Paul here?

This is Milishion.

It's as far from Asura as Africa is from Mongolia.

Is he here to search for me?

No, he shouldn't have known that I was teleported to the Demon Continent.

In that case, for a different matter, huh?

What about his job protecting the Buena village?

"And so, why are you here, Tou-sama?"

Thinking that I should ask this first, in response Paul looked surprised.

"[Why?] you ask, you saw the message didn't you?"

"Message... you say?"

Message.

What message?

I don't recall seeing anything like that.

Seeing me obviously confused, Paul frowned.

Could it be that I said something that upset him?

"Oi, Rudeus. What have you been doing up until now?"

"Even if you ask that, it was pretty rough, you know."

I'm the one who wants to know what's going on.

While thinking this, I recounted my journey up until now.

About how I had been transported to the Magic Continent, I had been saved by a certain Magic race person, how I became an adventurer, and about the year I had spent with Eris on the Demon Continent.

Thinking about it, it had been a pretty fun trip. From the troubles we had at the start, as well as the half year we had lived as adventurers; we had experienced quite a lot.

It might have been because of that, but I gradually became more talkative, and

started to talk more passionately about the events that had occurred while I was journeying. Everything that I had said was completely non-fiction; a great big spectacle.

I had separated my journey into three parts:

The first was meeting Ruijerd and becoming friends with him, and then the chaos at Rikarisu town.

The second was about the Great Magician Rudeus helping Ruijerd, and his journeying to reform the world.

The third was about how some cowardly Beast People had captured me, and my desperate struggles in captivity.

Though I had dramatized a few parts, I began to speak more smoothly, and gradually my gestures became more joyful and I started to tell the story while making exaggerated sound effects.

By the way, I had left out the stuff about the Hitogami.

"And so when we got to Wind Port, what we saw was..."

"..."

Around the time when I had finished telling the second part, the 『The Journey of 3 Black-listed People Through the Demon Continent - Empathy Arc』, I suddenly stopped talking.

Paul had become sullen.

His face had distorted into an irritated expression, and he was tapping his finger on the table.

I might have upset him somehow.

Without understanding, I was about to continue my story.

"After that, we headed to the Great Forest."

"That's enough."

In an irritated voice, Paul cut me off.

"That you spent the last year gallivanting about, I understand quite well now."

I became just a little irritated at Paul's words.

"I had quite a tough time as well you know."

"Just what was tough about it?"

"Eh?"

When he had asked that in return, I let out a strange voice.

"From your tone, I didn't feel like you had even an ounce of hardship."

That's because I told it like that.

Though, certainly I may have gotten a bit carried away.

"Hey, Rudi. There's one thing I'd like to ask."

"What is it?"

"You, why didn't you gather information about the other people who had been teleported while you were on the Demon Continent?"

I stayed silent.

I had no choice but to stay silent.

Even if he asked me [Why?] I had no way to answer.

There was only one way to reply.

There was only one reason.

It was because I had forgotten.

At first we had struggled with all our strength, however even when we had room to breathe again, I hadn't even once thought that there might've been people besides us on the Demon Continent.

"I-, I had forgotten... We didn't have the time to, and..."

"Didn't have the time? Even though you had the time to help out some demon you didn't know, you didn't have the time to concern yourself about the other people who had been teleported?"

I stay silent.

I had gotten my priorities wrong.

Now that he mentions it, certainly that may have been the case.

Still, don't ask me this after it's already happened.

I had really forgotten at that time.

I can't be helped, right?

"Hah! Without searching for others, without writing a single letter, together with that cute, cute ojou-san like you were on a picnic, living as an adventurer. Not only that, you had a strong guard to escort you. And then, hah, when you first came to Milishion you saw a kidnapping, and put panties on your head and played hero?"

Paul sighs at me in ridicule, and reaches for the jug of alcohol on the neighboring table. He drank half of it in a gulp, then spat as if to make fun of me.

Because that gesture was unabashedly making fun of me, I became irritated. Though I won't tell him to stop drinking, aren't we in the middle of an important discussion?

"Even I've had to deal with one thing after another. I had decided that in a

situation where I couldn't tell left from right, I would protect only Eris... Various things had happened, so it couldn't be helped, right?"

"It's not like I'm blaming you or anything."

He had spoken in a tone that ridiculed me. Finally, I began to raise my voice.

"In that case, why are you picking a fight with me!?"

I reached the limits of what I could endure. I don't understand why Paul is saying things like this.

"Why, you ask?"

Once again, Paul spits.

"I should be asking you that."

"What about me?"

I can't comprehend it. What is he trying to say?

"Was that Eris you mentioned, Phillip's daughter?"

"Eh? Ah, of course she is."

"I've never seen her, but she's definitely quite the cute ojou-san huh? Was not sending letters because you thought the number of guards around her would increase, and it'd get in the way of your flirting?"

"Didn't I just say that I had forgotten?"

I hadn't thought of anything but that.

Certainly, Eris really does have good standing.

The Greyrat family is huge.

Possibly, had we spoken to the lord of Saint Port, we might have gained one or two guards.

But I had explained that at that time I had been caught by the Beast People and so... oh, I hadn't explained, huh? I hadn't gotten up to that part yet.

Even so.

I aimed to do the things that I could, in my own way.

Though I didn't manage to do everything in the best way possible, that doesn't give him the right to blame me like this.

"Leader. How about leaving it there? He's still young so even if he had said a little too much, it can't be helped, right?"

When I became silent, the bikini warrior from before had come from behind and placed her hands on Paul's shoulders. Seeing this, I laugh in scorn.

In the end, it's this sort of thing.

Though this man speaks high and mightily, he's a man who won't discriminate when it comes to women.

He's that sort of man.

He isn't in a position to say anything to me.

I haven't laid my hands on Eris once.

Certainly there were close calls.

There were times when I was ruled by my desires as well.

But I never did lay my hands on her.

"When it comes to women, I don't want to be told this by you, Tou-sama."

"...Huh?"

Paul's eyes glaze over in irritation. I don't notice.

"What's the deal with the woman over there?"

"What about Vera?"

"Do Mother<--Esteemed mother (Kaa-sama)--> and Lilia know that you have such a beautiful woman nearby?"

"...They don't. There's no way that they would."

Paul's expression warps into one of regret but I don't see it. I was deluded into thinking that I was winning the argument.

"So you're cheating as much as you like, then? You've had her put on quite the erotic outfit. It seems that the day when I get a new brother or sister is close at hand, huh?"

Before I realize.

Before I realize, I had been hit, and was on the ground.

Paul is making a vicious expression and is looking down at me.

"Don't fuck around, Rudi."

I had been hit.

Why?

Shit.

"Oi, Rudi. Since you're here, it means that you passed by Saint Port, didn't you?"

"And what about it?"

"Then you should know, right!?"

I don't know what's going on anymore.

Just that Paul is hiding something, and that though I don't know about it, he's blaming me because he thinks it's natural that I do.

Don't fuck around with me.

Even I have things that I don't know.

There's heaps of things that I'd like to know about.

"I don't know!"

I raised my fist and struck at Paul.

It's avoided.

At the same time, I activate my mystic eye.

<My leg gets caught, and I'm toppled>

I stamp on Paul's leg with all my might.

I then spin around and aim for Paul's chin.

<He avoids it and strikes back at the counter> He moves really well for a drunk person.

I gather mana into my right arm.

I still can't match Paul in close quarters combat.

However, if I use magic it isn't a problem.

I create a tornado with my right hand, and Paul is sent flying.

"Whoa!?"

Paul flies spinning through the air, and is thrown behind the counter.

With a crash, he sends the jug of alcohol flying, and falls onto the bed.

"Shit! You've fucking done it now!"

He immediately gets up but his legs are tired.

This idiot drank too much.

In the past, Paul was stronger than this.

It's likely that even in that position, he would have evaded my tornado.

"Rudi, you bastard..."

Another woman rushes over to the stumbling Paul. Even though he surrounds himself with women, he really dared to say all those things to me.

"Don't touch me!"

Paul shakes her off and walks in front of me.

"Paul, just how many women did you cheat with while I was gone?"

"Shut the hell up!"

<He swings his right fist towards me>

It's a really unsightly, telegraphed punch^[4].

Is this really the same Paul?

This is an attack that I can avoid even without my mystic eye.

I grip that arm and perform a one-arm shoulder throw.^[5]

Of course I can't do anything like Judo.

I had used wind magic to kick us off and like that, I forcefully threw him.

"Guhah...!"

It seems that he didn't even perform an ukemi^[6] properly.

I don't actually know if the technique exists in this world, though.

I mount Paul who had clumsily fallen to the floor.

The same way that Eris usually does, I check both his arms with my knees, and neutralize any resistance.

"I've been trying my best, too!"

I hit him.

I hit him.

I hit him.

Paul endures it and looks at me in hatred.

Shit.

What's with those eyes.

Why do I have to be looked at like that.

"There was no helping it, right!? I was at a place I knew nothing about! There wasn't anyone I knew! Even then I somehow managed to make it here! Why do I have to be reproached like this!?"

"...Since it was you, you should have done things better!"

"I couldn't!"

After that, I wordlessly hit Paul again and again.

Paul didn't say a word, and while bleeding from his mouth, just continued to look at me.

In an irritated way.

Like he was looking at someone who couldn't be reasoned with.

Why?

He shouldn't have been a person who would look at me like this.

Shitt...

Shit.

"Stop itttttttt!"

At that time, something had flown at me from the side and bumped into me.

Because of the impact I had staggered, and in that instant Paul thrust me away and stood up.

I prepare myself for an attack.

However, Paul didn't move.

In the space between us stood a single little girl.

"Stop it already!"



She has a nose a lot like Paul's, and golden hair a lot like Zenith's.

I understand with just a glance.

It's Norn.

My younger sister.

She's gotten quite big.

If I remember correctly, she's five now, right?

No, has she already turned six?

Why is she facing me with her arms spread apart like that?

"Don't bully father!"

I receive those words, stunned.

Bully?

No, I mean...

Eh?

Norn is glaring at me with eyes that are about to cry.

I suddenly look around, and for some reason...

Looks of criticism are gathered on me.

"...What's with this?"

My heart suddenly runs cold.

I recall that incident from decades ago.

It was the time when I was bullied.

At that time as well, I had slightly misspoken and was looked at with criticism from everyone in the classroom.

Ahh, that's right.

I've said something wrong.

I give up.

My heart is broken.

I don't care anymore.

I'm going home.

I didn't see anything.

I don't know anything.

I'll head back to the inn and wait for Eris and Ruijerd.

Then I'll depart immediately.

Tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow.

Even if it's not the capital, we can still make money, so who cares.

There should be an adventurers guild in Westport as well.

"Rudi. It wasn't just you that was teleported. Everyone in Buena village was wrapped up in the teleportation disaster too."

Paul says something and I dimly hear it.

...

Eh?

What, just now, what?

"We had left messages at Saint Port, and Westport as well. At the adventurer's guild. You became an adventurer, didn't you? Why didn't you see them...?"

Even if you say that, there wasn't anything at...

No, that's right.

I never went to the adventurer's guild in Saint Port.

Since after I went to pick up Ruijerd, I ended up at the Dorudia Clan's village.

"While you were happily travelling, countless people died."

Countless people.

That scale.

A magical disaster.

A teleportation disaster.

Why didn't I realize it?

That Hitogami said 『Large Scale Magical Disaster』.

Why did I think that Buina village would be fine?

I see.

Everyone is missing...

"In other words... Sylphy as well?"

When I say that, Paul once again makes an irritated expression.

"Rudi. You're more concerned about a woman than your own mother?"

I gulp.

"K-, Kaa-sama is still missing!?"

"Yeah. I couldn't find her at all! Lilia as well!"

Paul's bitter words hit me like a slap.

I stagger like I'd been hit.

My legs are unsteady.

I feel like I'm going to collapse.

In front of me is a chair.

I somehow manage to lean on it.

"To search for the missing people, we formed into a search party organization."

A search party.

I see.

In other words, the people here are the search party?

"B-, but why would a search party kidnap people?"

"There are those who became slaves as well."

Slaves.

Having been teleported, without knowing where they are, they're deceived, and then made into slaves...

And apparently there are a great number of people like this.

Paul and his group seem to compare slaves one by one against the missing person list, and earnestly ask the owner for their freedom. However, among them are many who don't want to part with the slaves that they've obtained. According to Milisian law, no matter the circumstances, once a person is made a slave they are the property of their master.

That's why Paul decided to forcefully abduct the slaves.

Stealing slaves is of course a crime.

But there's a loophole in this law.

Using this, Paul freed countless slaves.

Of course, if it was according to their wishes, then it would have been fine to leave the slaves.

However, the majority of the slaves begged in tears to be allowed to return to their hometown.

The boy they rescued this time was one of them.

I thought I had seen his face somewhere, that boy was one of those who had bullied Sylphy in the past, Somal.

During this past year, he had been made to live as a prostitute.

Hearing the bitter cries of those who were made into slaves, but among them were those who couldn't be saved.

In other words, there were also those who were neglected by some of the nobles, but couldn't understand the search party's high-handed way of doing things.

From above, from below, they were criticized from all sides.

Though Paul's nerves were worn down each day, he never gave up and continued to give his best.

All for the sake of saving those who were teleported due to the magical calamity.

"Rudi. I thought that you had already noticed the situation long ago, and had already taken action."

At Paul's words, I hang my head without power.

Don't say something so unreasonable...

How exactly was I supposed to realize?

Ahh, but, I see.

I see.

It's possible that during my journey on the Demon Continent, there were people from Fedoa region in one of the towns I passed through.

Had I asked one of them for their stories, I might have realized the severity of the situation.

I was negligent in confirming the situation.

I should have prioritized finding out about the disaster over Ruijerd's situation.

I've failed.

"So for you to have been having a carefree adventure is..."

Thoughtlessness.

Ahh, that's right.

That's right, isn't it?

While I was being aroused by Eris's panties.

While I was being aroused by the bodies of the young women at the adventurers guild.

While I was licking the thighs of the Demon Realm's Great Empress.

While I was groping the bodies of the beast-eared girls...

Paul had been risking his life to find our family.

Of course he's angry.

"..."

Only, I can't apologize.

Because it couldn't be helped, right?

How should I say this?

It's because I thought that I had been trying my best at that time.

"..."

Paul doesn't say a thing.

Norn is silent too.

However, I can feel from her gaze a strong sense of rejection.

That feeling gouges at me.

It gouges at my heart.

It gouges at my soul.

When I look around, I find that all of Paul's companions had been looking at me with looks of reproach.

Thoughts of my past cross my mind.

It was the day after, when the pictures of me, shown to be naked and inferior, were pasted around the school.

The looks of everyone when I entered the classroom...

The inside of my mind turned pure white.

Part 2

Before I noticed, I had returned to our inn.

I was collapsed on the bed.

I have no idea.

I have no idea about anything at all.

I don't think about anything.

There was a rustling from inside my clothing.

When I had taken a look, I found writing paper.

I crushed it and threw it away.

I didn't want to do anything.

Thinking about it, it was the first time I was treated coldly by my parents.

Both in my previous life, and my current life.

Something this or that, my parents had spoiled me.

Just now Paul completely rejected me.

That attitude was... that's right.

It was the attitude that my siblings had shown when they had thrown me out of the house.

What did I do wrong?

I don't understand.

I had planned to do things right.

Even when I think back, I hadn't made any fatal errors in judgement.

If I were to venture a guess, it'd be relying on Ruijerd at the beginning.

Even while doubting that God, I had followed his advice and saved Ruijerd.

I tried my best to speak happily about my journey too.

Though there's also the fact I had gotten carried away, I hadn't wanted to worry Paul, and there was also my ego.

'I managed to do all this', I had wanted to say.

To Paul, it's possible that it wasn't funny.

To Paul's companions as well, as expected it wasn't funny.

I really slipped up.

I didn't intend to prioritize Sylphy over my mother.

I mean, Paul and Norn were there.

I had thought that Zenith was alright as well, right?

No, that's an excuse, isn't it?

At that moment, I hadn't thought of Zenith at all.

It was Paul that had brought up the topic of women.

I haven't laid my hands on Eris at all.

I was told off by Paul who had a history of cheating.

That's why I had the right to...

Ahh, so that's how it is?

Could it be that Paul hasn't laid his hands on them?

I see.

If that's the case then of course he'd be mad.

Okay. I feel like I'm a little more collected now.

Alright.

Tomorrow, I'll talk to him one more time.

At any rate, even Paul just got a bit emotional.

Wasn't there a case like this before, as well?

If we talk, he'll understand.

Right, it'll be okay.

Even I worry about my family. It's not like I don't.

That I didn't investigate was because I missed out on the information a little.

Certainly, it's painful that in this year and a half that I could have searched the Demon Continent, I didn't do anything.

Still, I'm still alive.

I'll work things out somehow.

Exactly.

It'll be fine if I properly search for them.

Paul should understand as well.

That in this wide world, just because you didn't find them immediately, doesn't mean that they won't ever be found.

That's why I'll calm Paul down, and we'll work out this time's plan.

We'll focus on places that they haven't searched yet.

I'll lend a hand as well.

If I deliver Eris to Asura, I can continue north to search the northern regions.

Right. First I'll meet Paul...

I'll return to that bar, and meet with Paul...

"...Oopp."

Suddenly I had felt nauseous, and ran to the bathroom.

Like that, I throw everything up.

Even if I understand in theory, my heart isn't cleared up at all.

Because it had been a long time since I had faced rejection from my family, my heart completely broke.

Part 3

Ruijerd had returned a little after noon.

He had an expression more cheerful than usual, and it seemed like he had obtained something that had been made to look like an envelope. But when he saw me sitting on the bed, he frowned.

"Did something happen?" I was asked.

"My father was in this town."

When I replied as such, Ruijerd's expression grew even more severe.

"...Was something unpleasant said to you?"

"Yeah."

"It's been a while since you've met him, right?"

"Yeah."

"Tell me the details."

Without concealing anything, I told him what happened.

Ruijerd briefly said "Is that so?".

The conversation was paused there.

He left for a while.

Part 4

In the evening, Eris returned.

Something might have happened because she looks quite excited.

Leaves are stuck to her chest, and there's dirt on her cheeks. However, she looks quite happy.

Considering that appearance, it seems she had a good time goblin hunting.

I'm glad.

"Welcome back."

"I'm back, Rudeus. You know! Ah..."

When I smiled at her, she made a startled expression.

Then like that, she ran over to me.

"Who was it!? Who did this to you!?"

With a frantic expression, she started shaking me by the shoulders.

"It's nothing, you know."

"There's no way that's the case!"

She continued to ask me questions like that several times.

She was persistent, and so without hiding anything, and indifferently, I told her about my conversation with Paul.

I told her about what I had said to him, about what kind of reaction he had, and about what happened.

"What's up with that? That's!"

Hearing my story, Eris became extremely angry.

"To say something so one-sided like that, it's unforgivable! Just how hard does he think you've been working!? For him to say that was playing...! Absolutely unforgiveable! He's disqualified as a father! I'll beat him to death!"

Saying something dangerous, she rushed out of the room with sword in hand.

I didn't have the energy to stop her, and so I saw her off like that.

Part 5

A few minutes later, Eris returned.

She had been caught by Ruijerd by the scruff of the neck, and was carried in like a cat.

"Let me go!"

"Don't get involved in parent and child fights."

Ruijerd declared as such, and lowered Eris onto the bed.

Eris immediately turned her head to glare at him.

"Even if it's a fight between parent and child, there are still things that you can say and things that you can't!"

"Yeah. But I can understand the feelings of Rudeus's father."

"Then what about Rudeus's feelings!? It's Rudeus! Rudeus who's always easy going, and who'll stay calm even when he's kicked and punched, Rudeus! He's become this depressed!"

"If he's depressed, then console him. If you're a woman, you can do that much, right?"

"Wha-!"

Eris was lost for words, and Ruijerd went downstairs.

Eris who was left in the room looks like she can't calm down, and wanders about, here and there.

Sneaking glances towards me, she sometimes folds her arms in an imposing stance. Like that, she'll open her mouth to say something, but stop, and again she'll wander back and forth.

She can't calm down.

She's like a bear in a zoo.

In the end, Eris sat down next to me.

Meekly.

Without saying a word.

She sits.

She delicately increases the distance.

I wonder what kind of face Eris is making?

I couldn't really see.

I didn't have the composure to look at another's face.

A little time passed by.

I suddenly realized that Eris wasn't by my side.

When I began to wonder where she had gone to, I was embraced tightly from behind.

"It'll be alright. I'm on your side..."

Saying that, Eris held my head.

Soft, hot, and smelt a little of sweat.

All of it was something that I had experienced over this past year; it was Eris' scent.

I felt a sense of security.

The feeling of anxiety I had from being rejected by my family, my fear...

I felt like all of it was being swept away.

Eris might already be part of my family.

Had Eris been there in my past life, I might have been saved at an even earlier point.

It was an embrace that let me think that.

"Thank you, Eris."

"I'm sorry, Rudeus. I'm, not really good at this kind of thing after all."

I had turned around and clasped her hand.

They were callused from her sword, strong, and not hands that you could believe belonged to the daughter of an aristocratic family.

They were hands that showed great effort.

"No, you really helped me."

"...Mmmn."

The pieces of my heart had connected, and just a little, my composure returned to me.

While thinking this, and feeling relieved, I entrusted my body weight to Eris.

I'll lean on her for just a little while.

Notes

1. [Google image: 外ハネ](#)

2. [Google image: アヒル口](#)

3. In the original text he sounds glad while saying this. Not sure if it comes

through in the translation.

4. In martial arts, the name for attacks that display a lot of wind up, or have particularly large movements. They're horrible because you can see them coming from a mile away. Also known as a 'telephone punch', as the original text states.
5. Ippon Seoi(nage) - http://bloc.co.jp/blog/assets_c/2013/10/ichida1-thumb-650x418-29699.gif
6. In Japanese martial arts this term is used to refer to rolls and other break falls.

Chapter 47 - Reunion with Paul

Part 1

Paul

I was drinking in a bar.

Since it's almost night the number of customers started to increase.

In reverse the number of group members have decreased.

In the middle of the bar I was sitting at one table, intent on continuing to drink endlessly.

I'm sure my displeasure is hanging in the atmosphere

No one is approaching me.

"Yo, I was looking for you?"

And just as I was thinking a voice called out to me.

After I raised my face a monkey faced man was there with the ends of his mouth raised.

This is the first time in a year since I last saw this face.

"Gisu? You bastard... Where do you think you've been."

"Ohhh, what's this what's this, you're just as displeased as always."

"Obviously."

I clicked my lips together with a bit of a cheh, and then touched the side of my

face.

The pain still remains.

The place where I was hit by Rudeus.

I was putting up a strong front, but it probably would have been a good idea to get healing cast after all.

Shit, Rudeus you bastard.

What do you mean [If you have my magic then the Magic Continent is no problem.]

If you have that much room for leisure, then you should have enough to search for people.

On the contrary, you just kept on intending to tell me about eating the meat from Great Land Turtles.

What do you mean by [If I hadn't thought of the idea of creating a pot with earth magic, then there's no way I could have continued eating that crappy tasting meat for another year.]

If you have the time to search for ingredients then there's something else you should have been doing, right.

Shit.

In the end you even suspected me of cheating?

Stop screwing around with me.

Since the teleport incident happened I haven't even once thought about a woman.

I haven't done anything about myself and put it on the shelf, and then you're the one blaming me?

Don't screw with me.

What do you mean you didn't know.

If you had properly investigated while on the Magic Continent, by this time you

could have met with either Zenith or Lilia.

Don't screw around with me...

"Hehe.. since you're like that it seems you haven't met yet."

What's so funny Gisu.

While laughing so frivolously it seems he ordered something.

In any case it's probably just alcohol.

This man is a bigger drinker than that dwarf Talhand.



"Paul. Show your face at the Adventurer's Guild tomorrow."

"Why should I?"

"You'll be able to meet with an interesting person."

An interesting person.

Someone who would cure my displeased mood.

The reason why Gisu showed his face today.

And then the person I just met today.

After putting those three together, I realized the answer.

"Rudi, huh?"

After hearing that the monkey face turned sour, and started scratching the side of his head.

"What's this? Did you already know?"

"I met him."

"If that's the case, it doesn't seem like you're very happy. Did you get into a fight?"

A fight.

Well, fight, huh.

It didn't even grow into a fight though?

Shit, after remembering it my face started to ache again.

"What happened Paul, tell me about it."

With that friendly face Gisu moved to the chair next to me.

Since the old days this guy has always been good at listening to other people's worries.

This time as well, it seems even if I say he's meddling, he'll specifically go out of his way to listen.

"Ah, listen to this..."

Then I started to tell Gisu about what just happened a while ago.

The fact that I was happy about the meeting.

Although something made the story awkward and I asked Rudeus to tell me about what he had been doing up until now.

And then Rudeus started to tell me about his journey in an excessively fun tone.

He started to sing about a worthless story of bragging.

Rather than that boasting, there should have been something else you should have done is what I pointed out.

And the fact that he snapped back at me.

And the fact that he pointed out women and I snapped.

And the fact that we fought and I was beaten down.

Gisu just kept listening nodding to himself at specific points.

[Yeah], it seems he's in agreement [I see now], it seems he's understood as he listened.

He was listening with that kind of feeling but at the end he said this.

"You know, aren't you holding your expectations for your son a bit too high?"

"Huh?"

I realized that I had raised my voice in a foolish way.

Over expectation?

What's that?

Towards who?

"I do? Towards Rudi?"

"I mean, think about it a bit more."

While I was perplexed Gisu kept pressing me for an answer while connecting his words.

"That guy is certainly amazing. I've never seen a guy who can use voiceless incantations before. When I heard that he had exterminated dozens of monsters during the past year, shivers ran down my spine. I'm sure that guy Rudeus is in fact a genius that only appears once every hundred years."

That's right. Rudi is a genius.

He's a genius.

A true genius.

He's a guy who could do anything since he was small.

There was a point where I thought he was bad in some places, but he even managed to get that Philip to offer his daughter.

The Philip who always used to denounce me that much.

"Yeah, that's right. He's amazing. After all since he was five years old--"

"However, he's still a brat."

After he cut straight into the conversation I stayed quiet.

"Rudeus is still an 11 year old brat."

Gisu said it once again while reflecting upon it.

"Even you, the time when you left your house was when you were 12 right?"

"Yeah"

"Didn't you used to say anyone younger than 12 is still a brat?"

"What's that mean, what are you trying to say with that."

Rudi is stronger than me.

Certainly I was drinking alcohol today, but even if you took away that fact he had become strong.

Even though I was drunk I was serious.

I seriously used the North God style [Four-legged Form] that I didn't want to use and even went as far as using Sword God style's [Silent Sword].

Even with that, my sword only cut the string of the panties he was wearing on his head.

Rudi wasn't serious at all.

As proof of that, all of the group members were taken down with just minor injuries.

He was fighting while going easy on them, I lost to someone going easy.

I don't know how much stronger he's gotten in the time we hadn't met.

Just, Rudi was already way more clever than I when he was seven years old.

His physical strength should be stronger than mine.

And his head is better than mine.

In that case, it's not surprising that he can do everything better than me.

What does age have to do with it.

"Paul, what were you doing when you were 11 years old?"

"What?"

If I remember correctly, I was learning swordsmanship at my house.

It was an everyday life of being scolded by my father.

Even when I put in a bit of work, he would complain about everything and hit me.

"Do you think the you of that time could have survived on the Magic Continent?"

"Hah, Gisu, that entire premise is strange. Rudi you know, had a strong Magic Race as an escort with him. He knows human language, Magic God language, and Beast God language, he even beat an A rank monster in a single hit! He was together with a guy like a monster escorting him. Even if it wasn't me anyone could fly through the Magic Continent."

"It couldn't be done. You wouldn't be able to do it, absolutely not. Even if you went to Magic Continent right now, you wouldn't be able to return by yourself."

He asserted it while intimidating me.

Gisu is just the same as usual, laughing frivolously.

This guy's smile is just as irritating as always.

"Ha!! Then isn't that all the more reason! He did something I can't do. He's a genius. Rudi is a genius! My son is a genius. He's already a fine adult. There's nothing for me to say. What mistake is there with placing expectations on a guy with the ability to meet them? Right Gisu, am I mistaken?"

"It's mistaken. You're always mistaken."

While continuing to laugh frivolously he started to chug the beer that was brought out.

"Puha... That's good. After all you can't drink something like this in the Great

Forest."

"Gisu!"

"I get it, you're loud."

Gisu placed the wooden cup down with a bam sound.

And then he suddenly started talking seriously.

"Paul. You've never been to the Magic Continent before right?"

"What about it?"

I've never been to the Magic Continent.

Though of course I've heard plenty about it from people.

Rumors that it's a dangerous land.

Just by walking down the road monsters start appearing and if you don't eat the monsters you can't live.

However, what's going to happen just from there being a lot of monsters.

"Just as you know, I was born on the Magic Continent. Then ask me, how is the Magic Continent dangerous."

"Come to think of it, I don't remember you ever talking about that. How is it dangerous?"

"First, there are no roads. There's a path, but it's nothing like the ones in Milis Continent and Central Continent, paths with few monsters that are safe don't exist anywhere. No matter where you walk around, C rank or above monsters just come out to attack you."

Certainly I've heard there are a lot of monsters, but C rank?

They're opponents that only come out deep in the forests of the Central Continent.

Either they come in swarms or most of them have some sort of special ability.

"Isn't that exaggerating a bit?"

"No, it's the truth. I'm not saying a single lie right now. Magic Continent is that sort of Continent. In any case, there's a lot of monsters."

Gisu's eyes were serious.

However, even if this guy makes eyes like these, unexpectedly he can lie.

I won't be deceived.

"On such a Continent, even if you call him excellent, a child with no combat experience was suddenly thrown."

"Yeah..."

If he means no combat experience, it must be about Rudi.

Now that he has said it, I've never heard talk of him fighting anyone.

Just, it seemed like he skillfully repelled some kidnappers, and that he couldn't even win against Ghyslaine unless he can open some distance.

I don't know of a swordsman better than Ghyslaine.

If it's getting close to that guy, then Rudi with an appropriate distance, there shouldn't even be 1000 guys in the world who can win.

That's why, having combat experience or not is unrelated talk.

Even that North God, Alex R. Karuman, I've heard without any combat experience, in his first actual combat he cut down and killed a Sword Emperor.

"Then, an adult appeared there who was going to save them. A Magic Race, certainly he was a strong guy. Supard Race. You know right. That Supard race."

"Yeah."

Supard race.

In regards to that matter, honestly I was half in doubt about it.

I heard there were almost none left in the Supard races even on the Magic Continent.

"In a state where he didn't know left from right, there was one existence who appeared he could reach out for. The existence who saved him in a weakened state. However, Supard race are scary. Since you don't know what they'll do if you turn them down after all. That is, he had to grab onto that hand."

"Well, I guess so."

"Then after being saved, the clever Rudeus thought up this idea. [What is this guy's objective?] just like that."

Certainly.

If it's Rudeus he would think that.

I wouldn't realize it, but he's a smart guy in those matters.

Even at that time when he saved Lilia, he showed a discerning eye that you wouldn't think belonged to a child.

"However, there's no way he could figure out the other side's objective."

I'm sure.

Since you don't know what the other side's aim is, it's how people like Gisu live.

"Right now he's saving me, but he might eventually cut us off. Then and there Rudeus thought [In order to not be cut off, I'll sell him a favor.]"

"What's that? Favor? Would it go well?"

"Don't poke fun at it. Even describing it as a favor, it stabs at someone in the

feelings, and causes a camaraderie to sprout, that kind of thing is good."

Awareness of comrades starts to sprout, huh.

I see now.

If he does that, then I can agree with Rudi's actions.

He did a favor in return for the Supard's protection, and then polished his skills in the case the time he was alone ever came.

It's rational.

You could say Rudeus chose the safest route.

Hnnn, as expected, he can do it well.

"Cheh... if he's thought that far, why can't he do anything beyond that."

After I let those words out, Gisu held up his fingers.

Then he started to go over it one by one.

"In a place for the first time, a first time adventure, now matter how intelligent he is, it was full of things he didn't know about. In order to not be deceived he had no choice other than learning. On top of that he had to deal with a Magic Race who he never knew when he would be betrayed by, and right behind him was something like a little sister who he has no choice but to protect."

While saying it indifferently Gisu folded his fingers, and then finally he brought two together.

"If he had even managed to search for other people who were teleported on top of that he'd be a superman. A superman. It wouldn't be strange for him to be included in the [Seven World Powers] if that were the case."

The [Seven World Powers] huh.

That's a nostalgic name to hear.

In the old days I wanted to become as famous as that as well.

Even if we put aside a parent's overestimation, I think Rudi has enough potential to make it that far though...

"It's clearly overworking. Even if Rudeus is a genius, humans, you know, have limits."

"Why would a person who is pushing right along the borders of his limits, talk about his adventures in such an enjoyable way? No matter how you look at it, that was like a noble who was superficially entering a labyrinth and playing around only to return?"

If it really was that hard for Rudi, then he wouldn't have said it in that way of speaking.

Places where the journey was painful, or difficult.

He would have told me about times like those.

However, Rudeus never spoke of those even once.

"That is because he didn't want to worry you."

"...huh?"

I let out another foolish sound.

"Why would that guy worry about me? Since I'm a bad old man?"

"That's right. It's because you're a bad old man."

"Cheh... I see. That's right, I'm a weak man who runs away into alcohol over something worthless, I'm sure in the eyes of a genius-sama I would be quite

pitiful."

"Even if he wasn't a genius, the current you really looks pathetic, Paul."

Gisu let out a sigh.

"I'm going to say it because you can't see your own face, but right now your face is pretty terrible, you know?"

"A face enough to make my son pity me?"

"Yeah. If it's the current you, it's plenty enough to get in a fight and separate over."

It's so pathetic that you really wouldn't be able to say anything to it, is what Gisu added on.

I touched my own face.

I heard the sound of my beard from not shaving in any number of days crunching.

"Hey Paul, I'll say it once more."

Gisu said it while pushing his final thought.

"You're pushing too many expectations on your son."

I wonder what is wrong with holding your hopes too high.

Rudi has done everything well since the time he was born.

Enough to tear away at my face as a father.

I was never needed by Rudi.

"Hey, Paul you know. Why weren't you just honestly happy over meeting again?"

Isn't it fine. No matter what kind of journey Rudeus had. Even if it was a carefree and thoughtless journey. Even if it was a journey filled with playing around with women. Since you guys met again energetically. For starters you should be delighted over that fact."

"..."

That's right.

Even I was glad at first.

"Or else, were you afraid of meeting your son who had lost some part of his body? The chance of reuniting with a corpse was pretty high you know? No, on the Magic Continent there wouldn't even have been a corpse remaining."

Rudi, dead?

After seeing that energetic Rudi, it's a talk that has no sense of reality.

However, just a few days prior.

Wasn't I lost in melancholy over that image?

"Ahh-ah, how pitiable. After an amazingly difficult journey. Even though he finally managed to reunite with his father. That father had become an alcoholic piece of trash. If it were me, I would cut off ties with him right there."

Cheh... he's really saying whatever he wants while putting on a play.

"I get it Gisu. What you say is certainly correct. However, there is one thing I don't understand."

"What is it?"

"Why did Rudi not know any of the information about Buina village? There should have definitely been messages left at Saint Port."

Gisu made a bitter face while saying [That would be...]

This is the face he makes when he's trying to hide something.

"I'm sure that means he missed it unluckily."

"Gisu, where did you run into Rudi? Didn't you find him in Saint Port?"

I don't know where Gisu has been this past year.

However, Rudeus came from the north.

If we're speaking about large towns in the north where Gisu would be active, it would be Saint Port.

In Saint Port there's definitely a message left behind.

Besides, there should be group members staying in that place as well.

During the time when anyone crosses over from Magic Continent, in order to get information from that person.

If it's an adventurer, then there shouldn't be any reason for them to not visit the Adventurer's Guild.

"The place I met with Rudeus was in a Dorudia race village. I was surprised, after all, he was being held under suspicions of attacking the Holy Beast and thrown into a prison naked."

"Naked in a prison by the beast race... Seriously?"

I've heard about it from Ghyslaine.

In regards to the Dedorudia race being stripped naked, thrown into a cage, put into chains, and having cold water thrown at them are considered the greatest of humiliations.

It's something they would almost never to do outsiders, if they do it then they would make sure it's remembered until you die.

As a joke I once threw some water at Ghyslaine, she seriously glared at me.

"I see, and then what happened?"

"What's this, you didn't hear from Rudeus?"

"I only heard that he traveled from the Magic Continent."

That's right, why didn't he see the message left in Saint Port.

The most important part was missing.

Why?

Ah, I wasn't listening.

Damn it.

Why am I always like this, with a quick temper.

Calm down.

Rudi is superior.

Even though he's superior, he didn't come across the information.

I need to think about that more calmly.

If he had made it to Saint Port, even if he didn't want to, it would have entered his ears.

In other words, some sort of incident happened in Saint Port that he got dragged into.

An incident that got him captured by the Dedorudia race.

Wouldn't it be some sort of large incident.

In the past two or three days it should be something that the group members brought back information about, was there some sort of incident that happened?

"No, I don't really know all the details myself, but when I was in the Great Forest Mirudetto race's place, I heard rumors about a human race brat that was

captured in the Dedorudia village."

"Hn? Wait just a second, right now, where are you talking about?"

Mirudetto race?

If I remember correctly, it's a species of beast race.

A race that has ears like rabbits.

"A Mirudetto race village. It was a place with a patriarch so it's pretty big, but?"

Gisu's explanation was long and a bit annoying.

Honestly partway through I almost said [It's fine] with how long it was.

However, today we're talking about Rudi so I'll listen to the end, I wouldn't want it to the end without hearing the important parts.

Even though I just made the same mistake, as expected, I don't want to repeat the same mistake twice in one day.

The talk ended.

After compiling everything...

"Gisu, in other words, you were going around the races in the Great Forest, and spread information that if lost humans are found they should be sent to Milishion?"

"Yeah. Hehe, it's fine if you give me your thanks."

"Even if I did it wouldn't end there?"

Occasionally, I did think there were refugees coming from the direction of the Great Forest to depend on me, but I see, it was this sort of trick?

"Well, that talk is fine for now."

"Yeah."

I'll listen to it in more detail later, but for now let's put it aside.

"After I heard it was a human race child, it suddenly came to me, I quickly left for the Dorudia village. I'm not bragging, but my connections are wide. I have a number of acquaintances even in the Dorudia village. One of those acquaintances, I asked a warrior out of friendship, and plotted to be thrown into the same prison."

"Just a second, why was there a need for you to enter it?"

"In case we needed to escape if it came down to it. The beast race's prison are easier to escape from inside than the outside after all."

I know very well how skilled Gisu is at escaping from prison.

He's a man who can nonchalantly leave after being caught for cheating.

"Then you know. I thought I would go in to find a captured human race child, crying out in pity and despair... Kukukuha."

"What is it? What happened?"

"He was laying there nude, full of composure and says, [Welcome, to the highest point in your life.] just like that? I really had no idea what to say in response after that!"

Gisu was laughing out loud.

"It's not something to laugh about right."

"It's something to laugh at. I knew the moment I saw him. That this guy is Paul's son."

What is so interesting about that?

Or rather, what part about that would lead him to the conclusion that he's my son.

"He was exactly like the old you. The way he was so impudent on the first meeting, the way he was pointlessly arrogant, even the way he was making advances on the beast race woman, [I smell the scent of sexual excitement.], they totally saw through him, but even knowing that they saw through, he continued to look at her with perverted eyes just the same!"

It seems Gisu thought of something again, he was laughing out loud.

Hearing him dig up things from the past like this makes my back itch.

"Well, it was a bit longer until I knew for sure."

Gisu said that while chugging away at his beer.

"Well, since it was like that. It can't really be helped if he didn't know about the information. It seems like he never stopped by in Saint Port."

"Hmn? Wait a second Gisu, you entered the same cell right? Then..."

If this guy had just explained it.

"I didn't want to be lurking in the background between parent and child, this is where I just step back and leave it to you two to reconcile."

Gisu said it quickly and stood up from his seat.

"Hey, wait a second, the talk hasn't ended?"

"Ah, that's right. I forgot to say it, but it seems like Elinalize and the others have headed off towards the Magic Continent. I heard rumors of various men

being eaten by an elf in Saint Port, so there shouldn't be any mistake."

"Elinalize is?"

Even though I thought she hated me the most?

"Hehe... despite everything, those guys didn't really hate you all that much after all."

After leaving those final words, Gisu left the bar.

Of course, without paying any money.

He's that kind of guy.

Well, it's fine for today.

I'll treat you.

After drinking this much, I'll go sleep for today.

And then, I'll try to talk with Rudi tomorrow.

"Don't drink anymore. Tomorrow once you're sober, go to the [House of Dawn's Light], alright?"

Just like that Gisu returned and said that.

"I get it!"

He came back to hammer it down.

I sighed and put down the cup.

After thinking about it, I've been drinking too much recently.

Why was I running away into something like this.

The things that I need to do, there are still many more remaining.

"Ummm... Leader Paul, has your talk ended?"

Just as I was thinking that, a single woman came up with an apologetic expression.

I thought who are you.

After looking seriously at her face while drunk.

Then I realized she was one of the group members, I understood her to be Vera.

"Ohh...despite everything, today you're wearing a surprisingly docile outfit aren't you."

"Yeah, well..."

Vera nodded vaguely and took a seat in the chair Gisu was sitting in until just now.

Today she's not wearing her usual offensive-like and stimulative outfit.

Just like you can see anywhere, it's the outfit of a normal and plain town girl.

"That fight at noon, I was wondering if that could be my fault."

"Your fault? Why?"

"No, umm, since I'm like this? So, your son, might have misunderstood is what I was thinking..."

"It's unrelated. After all that guy, probably would have been suspicious just seeing your chest size."

There's a reason why Vera normally wears such light clothes.

She used to be a normal adventurer, but she was thrown to Milis Continent without any equipment in the teleport incident, she was captured by thieves and used for amusement.

Normally you would close off your heart after experiencing something like that, but she has a tremendous willpower and overcame it.

However, there were women who couldn't overcome it.

Vera's younger sister Shera was one such case.

That child, whenever she meets eyes with a man she can't stop from trembling.

Even with the exception of the group members. There's several.

In order to protect those girls from the stares, she tries to focus all the stares of the men on herself with her usual outfit.

Also, she's excellent at giving care to other women who have sunken eyes from similar experiences.

In my regards, I can't understand the feelings of a woman who has been raped, she's a subordinate who I wouldn't be able to go on without.

Obviously, there's no physical relationship.

There's no way that could be the case.

"I get it, you can go."

"Yes."

While feeling depressed Vera returned to the seats where the women were gathered.

"Jeez..."

If I look around properly, there are eyes looking at me with worry all over the place.

"Stop looking at me with such weird faces you all! I'll go reconcile with him tomorrow!"

After saying that at the end I stood up from my seat.

Part 2

After returning to my room, Norn was there sleeping alone.

I poured a glass of water from the jug on the table.

And took a big sip.

The lukewarm water fell straight into my dry stomach.

I slowly started to wake up from my intoxication.

In the old days, I used have a constitution that was bad with intoxication.

If I drank in large amounts I would be dead drunk, but it wouldn't remain for long periods.

After I started to regain self-awareness as my head slowly started to wake up, I started to caress Norn's head gently as she was sleeping and clinging to the blanket.

I thought Norn was a pitiable child.

Even though she has to stay near this kind of father, she should have plenty she wants to say, but without saying a single word of complaint she remains well-behaved.

If Norn were to die I wouldn't be able to go on living.

"Nmmu... Father..."

Norn let out those words.

She's not awake. It must be sleep talk.

She's an ordinary child.

Different from Rudi.

If I don't protect her...

"..."

If Rudi was ordinary.

Rudi would be sleeping here like this as well.

He would have never become a home teacher and continued to stay at home, then when the teleport incident happened, he could have clung onto me along with Norn, that could have been the case.

An ordinary Rudi.

An ordinary 11 year old Rudi.

In order to protect someone that I should be protecting, how could I...

My legs were trembling.

I finally understood the meaning behind the words "11 year old brat" that Gisu was saying.

That's right.

Whether he's ordinary or a genius.

What's different?

Isn't it the same.

Even if Norn were a genius, would I have said the same thing?

To a Norn who didn't know anything, and simply optimistically continued her journey, to such a Norn.

Would I have said something like that?

Would I have held such high expectations towards you as well and said it?

After imagining it I couldn't fall asleep.

I didn't feel like laying down.

I went outside the inn, I poured a jug of water intended for putting out fires over my head.

I remembered Rudi's face as he was leaving the bar and threw up.

Who was the person who made Rudi make that face?

The water gathered up in the bucket.

Inside of it the face of an idiotic man was being reflected.

It was the face of the number one most unsuitable father in the world, that sort of man's face.

"Hah... this is, this might be no good..."

If it was me, I would cut off all ties with this kind of man.

Part 3

Rudeus

The next morning.

I was having breakfast while feeling a bit refreshed.

The place was a bar next to our inn.

The food of Milishion is pretty good.

From the Great Forest over to here, it seems like the further we move the better tasting the food gets.

Today's breakfast is freshly baked bread and fresh tasting transparent seasoned soup.

Raw vegetable salad.

As well as thick pieces of bacon.

Last night I didn't stick around, but it seems of all things, evening meals included dessert.

It seems to be popular recently among young magician adventurers.

The dessert that comes out there and the sweet jelly that is popular with young adventurers.

I'm looking forward to it.

Eating food.

That's a happy thing to do.

If you're hungry, you'll get irritated after all.

If you get irritated your appetite disappears, and if your appetite disappears then you get hungry.

It's a splendidly vicious circle.

Even an android would become displeased.

"Welcome."

Just as I was thinking about that and drinking something like coffee after a meal, the shopkeeper of the bar looked towards the entrance.

There was a worn out man standing there with a pale face.

The instant I saw that face, I was clearly surprised.

The man gradually looked over the interior and found me.

I started to remember the feelings from yesterday again, even though nothing was said, I spontaneously avoided making eye contact.

"..."

After seeing how I look, the two who were sitting with me, it seems they quickly guessed who this person was.

Ruijerd raised his eyebrows; Eris stood up while kicking her chair.

"Who are you?"

The man who walked over here...

Eris stood before his eyes.

With both arms crossed and her legs in line with her shoulders spread out, while raising her chin up.

An authoritative attitude, glaring down at the mans face as if it were from a high position.

"Paul Greyrat. I'm his father."

"I know that!"

After I looked at Eris' back, I heard a voice fly over my head.

It was a sarcastic voice.

"What's this Rudi, hiding behind a woman, you've become quite the lady-killer haven't you?"

That tone and that expression.

I felt a little bit relieved.

That's right...

The old Paul would always tease me with that sort of feeling.

How nostalgic.

In regards to this behavior, I thought it was Paul's own way of making compromise.

First thing in the morning coming especially to this bar.

Even I have the margin to talk.

"Rudeus isn't hiding behind me! I'm hiding Rudeus! From a worthless father!"

Eris was trembling while grasping her fist tightly, it seems like at any moment

now she wants to send her fists flying into Paul's jaw.

I sent a signal to Ruijerd with my eyes.

He saw me, and then grabbed Eris by the collar and lifted her up.

"Wha!! Ruijerd! Let me go!"

"Let's leave these two alone."

"Didn't you see how Rudeus looked yesterday! That isn't a father!"

"Don't say it like that. A father is something like that."

While saying such things, he started to take his leave from here.

Then Ruijerd said it while passing by Paul and looking at him.

"I'm sure you have your own complaints, but those complaints can only be said while your son is alive."

"Ye-yeah..."

Ruijerd's words were heavy.

He seems to think of himself as the world's worst father after all.

In regards to another terrible father, it seems he could be feeling worried in his own way.

"Rudi, don't order older people around like that."

"It's different. It's not orders. It's the eye contact of trust."

"It's basically the same thing."

While Paul was saying that he sat down in front of me.

"Is that the Magic Race you were talking about yesterday?"

"Yes, Ruijerd-san the Supard race."

"Supard Race, huh. He seems to be a guy who gives off quite a good feeling. I guess that would mean rumors and the real thing are different, huh."

"You won't be afraid of him?"

"Don't say stupid things, he's the savior of my son."

His opinion seems to be quite different from yesterday, but...

I won't say anything unnecessary.

Now then.

"And then, what did you come for?"

An even stiffer voice than I thought came out.

And then Paul started to tremble a bit in surprise.

"No... Ummm, I thought to, apologize."

"For what?"

"What happened yesterday."

"There's no need for apologies."

Receiving an apology is convenient, but I even got to use Eris's chest as a pillow and slept well, I've properly reflected on it.

"I'll put it bluntly, until now I've felt like I've been playing around."

Putting aside the start, in general the journey proceeded favorably and I had enough leisure to be distracted by erotic things.

The fact that I didn't collect information in regards to Fedoa region was without a doubt a mistake on my part.

It was impossible in Saint Port, but we were in contact with an information seller in Wind Port.

If I had just asked them, I may have been able to gain some sort of information.

After listening and investigating, but obviously I didn't investigate it.

It was my mistake.

"Since that's the case, it can't be helped that father was angry. During this troubling period, please excuse me instead."

The fact that Fedoa region vanished and the household was split up all over.

When I think of Paul's mental state during such a time, I can't blame him.

I was only able to remain thoughtless because I had no idea.

Not knowing the scale of the disaster, it was a happy fact.

"No, there's no way that's the case. Rudi gave it his best as well I'm sure."

"No-no, not at all. There was plenty of room for leisure."

Since Ruijerd was there for us.

After we left the Town of Rikarisu it was relatively easy.

There was no chance of being ambushed by monsters, even if I didn't say anything at all he would have caught food, and he also stopped Eris's fights.

In regards to me, it was a comfortable journey.

Truly an easy operation.

"I see, it was leisurely..."

I don't know what Paul is thinking about.

The one thing I can say is that voice is trembling a bit.

"I do feel really sorry that I wasn't able to find the messages or whatever you left. What was written on them?"

"Things about me being fine and to search in the northern parts of Central Continent."

"I see. Then after I finish escorting Eris to the Fedoa region, I'll go search in the northern areas."

I responded as if I were a machine.

No matter how I think about it I feel like my words are stiff.

I wonder why...

I wonder if I'm tense.

Why?

I've already forgiven Paul, even Paul has forgiven me as well.

We might not be able to return to how we used to be, but right now is an emergency situation.

Since it's an emergency situation I'm tense.

It's obvious.

"That is that, but in regards to Fedoa region's current state, please tell me once more in detail."

"...Yeah."

Paul's tone was stiff as well and continued while trembling.

I'm sure he's tense as well.

No, rather than that, my own confidence after all is what's strange.

We can't act how we used to...

How did I use to interact with Paul before, again?

It was while striking up conversations with a light mouth, is what I was thinking, but...

"Where should I begin?"

In a stiff voice Paul started to tell me about what happened in the Fedoa region.

All of the buildings disappeared.

The fact that all the people living there were teleported.

A large number of deaths have already been confirmed.

Though there's still a large number of missing as well.

Paul started collecting contributions as a volunteer and created a search party organization.

For that reason he is here where the Adventurer's Guild Headquarters is, gathering information in Milishion as a central point.

Incidentally, there's another base in the Asura Kingdom Capital, it seems that place is being managed by the butler Alphonse-san.

It seems even now they're giving aid to refugees from Fedoa region.

And then, Paul left messages at various places.

The message to me was to divide our efforts and search for our family in various places.

The responsibility of the eldest son, who has become an independent adult.

In terms of age I'm still a child, but I already consider myself an adult spiritually.

If I had seen that message I would have understood the mood.

Zenith, Lilia, and Aisha still haven't been found.

It could be that they ended up somewhere on the Magic Continent, and then we passed by each other.

When I think that I lament my own actions.

Since I was hurrying so much with the journey, we only stayed in each town for a short period.

"Norn was alright, right?"

"Yeah, luckily she was in contact with me."

According to Paul, the thing known as teleportation, if you're making contact with some part of the body, then it seems you'll be sent flying along with them.

"Is Norn healthy and energetic?"

"Yeah, it seems she was a bit bewildered appearing in an unknown place at first, but now she's something like the idol of the group members."

"I see, that's great."

I see, Norn is healthy, huh.

Yeah, that's truly something good.

Certainly the blessing within unhappiness.

You could even call it something joyous.

However, why, is my heart not clearing up?

" ... "

" "

The conversation paused.

The atmosphere is unusual.

Paul and my relationship, it shouldn't have been something like this.

It was more like... a relationship with a light feeling...

This is strange.

Part 4

A little while after that.

Paul said something, but I couldn't think of anything good to respond to it.

Stiff responses with no thought just continued to be repeated.

Before anyone noticed, the only customers left were us.

Any time now, it wouldn't be strange for them to come and ask us to leave so they can start closing.

It seems Paul realized those signs as well.

"Rudi, what are you going to do from here on out?"

In the end that's what he asked.

"For the time being, I'll escort Eris to the Fedoa region."

"However, there's nothing left in the Fedoa region?"

"But, we'll still return."

We have no choice other than to return.

Phillip, Sauros, Ghyslaine as well, it seems no one has been found.

Even if we return there will be no one around.

However, we have no choice other than to return.

Why?

It's because that was the objective of the journey.

Realization of original intention.

First off we'll arrive in the Fedoa region, then look at the current state of affairs and confirm it with our own eyes.

After that, it would be alright if I head to the northern regions to search in Central Continent.

If we ask Ruijerd he could return to Magic Continent, and he could look in various places.

For the time being, it might be good to go to Begarrito Continent as well if I can understand the language.

"After that, we'll look in other places."

"I see."

Just like this the conversation quickly paused.

I don't know what to say.

"Here."

Just at that time the master of the bar left some cups in front of us.

There was steam coming out of the wooden cups left before us.

"It's service."

"Thank you very much."

Just as I realized, my throat was completely dry.

My hands were clenched tightly, and my palms were covered in sweat.

At the same time I realized my back and sides were awfully chilly.

My bangs were clinging to my forehead.

"Hey boy. I don't know the details, but.."

"...?"

"Please look at his face."

After hearing him say it I realized it for the first time.

I haven't looked at Paul's face even once.

Ever since the first time I avoided his eyes, not even once, I wasn't able to look at Paul's face.

I swallowed deeply and looked up at my father's face.

It was a face filled with worries.

It looked like it was going to cry at any moment.

It was a terrible face.

"What's with that face?"

"What do you mean what?"

Paul's face making a bitter smile was lacking energy.

Coupled with that expression, the cheeks that are sunken in, it looks like a different person.

However, I feel like I've seen a similar face somewhere before...

Where was it?

It was in the past.

The past.

I remembered.

I was looking in the mirror at home.

One or two years after I started secluding myself from being bullied.

While thinking I can still make it, but a time when I still couldn't allow myself to go along with my surroundings, and was too self-conscious.

I was too afraid to go outside, overcome with nothing but worry and impatience, it was my first unstable period I believe.

I get it now.

It's that kind of thing.

Paul is feeling insecure right now.

The people who he's looking for are still missing, no matter how long he waits no news will come, worrying, and worrying, maybe they were injured or something. Maybe they came down with some kind of illness. Or else, maybe they're already... Thinking that...

Worrying and worrying...

The one who finally showed up was me, since I was so different and easygoing from what he was imagining, he unintentionally got irritated.

Even I have such recollections.

That was soon after the time I started to seclude myself.

An acquaintance from the time I was in middle school came by to visit, he talked about various things from school.

Even though I'm this depressed, even though I'm this upset, he continued to tell me thoughtlessly about his life in school, I couldn't stand it and suddenly started to spit out severe words, venting my anger on him.

The next day, if he appeared again, I thought I would apologize to him.

However, he never came again.

I never went to him myself.

I had a strange pride.

I remembered.

This face is the face from that time.

"I have a proposition."

"Rudi?"

"It's this situation, we have no choice but to become adults."

"Yeah, well, certainly I don't think I'm greatly popular right now... What do you want to say?"

The inside of my heart suddenly cleared up.

I finally understood Paul's feelings.

After thinking that, it was simple.

Remember the past.

The time when Paul scolded me and I talked back to him with a strong tone.

In those days I thought he was a guy who couldn't be helped.

Twenty-four years old, he was still young as a father, so I thought it couldn't be helped.

It's been six years since then.

Paul is 30 years old.

Compared to me in my previous life he's still younger.

And then if you were to compare him to me in my previous life, he's still a splendid person.

I never did the things that I was supposed to do, only ever thinking about things to blame the other side.

I'm different from that time.

I swore that to myself.

Recently I feel like I've forgotten about it, but I don't want to repeat the same mistakes again and...

I swore that I would live seriously in this world.

The scale this time is much greater, but it's the same thing.

It's the same thing as six years ago.

We're repeating the same mistakes.

Even though we should have grown up, even though we should have advanced from before, we were just standing around in the same place this entire time.

In regards to that I will honestly reflect on.

And then above reflecting upon it,

"Let's start again, as if nothing happened yesterday."

I proposed that.

This time, I was hurt.

It felt like my heart was about to break.

I'm sure, in those days, my friend who was worried about me as well, felt like this.

And then, just like that with these feelings, he never appeared again.

I need to make sure that isn't the case this time.

My relationship with Paul, by no means should I let it be cut off.

"Yesterday, we never fought. Now, this moment, we are a father and child that have just been reunited for the first time in years. Let's go with that."

"Rudi? What are you saying?"

"It's fine, look, spread out your arms, now~"

"Ye-yeah?"

Paul just spread out his arms like he was told.

Then I jumped into that chest.

"Father! I wanted to see you!"

The smell of alcohol was floating in the air.

Right now he's sober, but he might be experiencing a hangover.

Or rather, I don't think he ever used to drink even a drop of alcohol...

"Ru-Rudi?"

Paul was bewildered.

I placed my jaw on Paul's shoulder and slowly said it.

"Look, it's your first time seeing your son in a long while, there's something you should be saying right."

While thinking it was quite the farce, I once again embraced Paul with all my strength.

His face had thinned, even his body I got the feeling that it had shrunk a full size.

My own body should have gotten bigger, but Paul had gone through some hardship, far more than me.

While continuing to be bewildered Paul let out the words...

"I-I wanted to meet you too..."

After I told him to say something, it seems like some kind of wall was torn down.

"I've missed you too... I've really missed you, Rudi... Always, no one was found, I thought everyone might have died... You are, after seeing your appearance..."

After looking up, Paul was shedding tears.

His face was distorting and crumpled.

A fully grown man shamefully broke down in tears and cried.

"Sorry, I'm sorry, Rudi..."

Somehow I ended up crying as well.

I patted Paul's back and after a little while we both were crying.

Just like this, after roughly five years I was finally able to be reunited with my father.



Chapter 48 - Reconfirmation of Objectives

Part 1

That day, I talked to Paul throughout the whole day.

It's not like we were talking about anything important.

They were just trifling conversations.

We started with what had been happening at Buina village during the few years since I had gone to Stronghold City Roa.

It seems that though he had two wives, there wasn't any debauchery. Zenith and Lilia had discussed things several times, and basically he would have no sexual relations with Lilia.

However, it seems that Lilia was asking for permission in the case that Zenith became pregnant a third time, and Paul couldn't endure no matter what... or so the discussions seemed to have gone.

Though it seems that Zenith had been conflicted about this, to Paul it was a convenient conclusion.

How envious, huh?

"And so, does it seem like I'll have another little sister?"

"Nah, it was fairly... Even though in your case it was just one shot..."

"To have given birth to such an excellent son in one shot, you were pretty lucky too, Tou-sama."

"Keep on saying that."

This isn't really the conversation a father and his 11 year old son would have,

huh? Or so I was thinking, but the mood was quite comfortable.

We didn't touch on Zenith or Lilia's life and death.

We intentionally avoided it.

We both understand.

Even if we discussed that topic, nothing happy would ever come of it, and we'd just be left with miserable feelings.

"Was Sylphy doing well?"

"Yeah. That kid is amazing. I could feel your talent as a teacher."

It seems that Sylphy had been doing well.

In the mornings were jogging and mana training, and in the afternoons she'd learn healing magic with Zenith.

It seems that after Aisha had grown to a certain extent, she'd learn etiquette from Lilia.

"I guess you'd call her 'earnest', huh? She'd come over to our house a lot and would do something in your room, Rudi."

"...Did Sylphy ever find anything there or anything like that?"

"What? Did you hide something that would get you in trouble if seen?"

"No, of course not. There's no way that would be the case, right?"

Oh geez.

"Well, it seems that everything disappeared, though."

According to what Paul said, it seems that most of the objects in the Fedoa region disappeared.

It seems that from small things like quill pens and ink jars, to architectural structures like houses and bridges, everything had disappeared.

The only exception were things that had been in contact with the people who were teleported, he said.

"Is that so?"

That's a shame.

Though I couldn't recall at all what was supposed to be a shame, but in the depths of my heart there was a profound sense of loneliness.

"What were you doing at the time?"

"You mean in Roa?"

I was asked, and so I answer.

About how on the first day I had been beaten by Eris, and it felt like my heart was going to break.

About how by chance (º º) we had been kidnapped, and how we had escaped somehow.

About how using that, I became a little closer to Eris.

About how despite this, she'd never listen in my classes.

About how I had begged Ghyslaine in tears.

About how thanks to her, Eris had begun to listen in class.

About how after this, we slowly became closer.

About how we learned to dance together.

And after that, about my 10th birthday.

"Your birthday, huh? Sorry about that..."

"What about it?"

"I didn't even show my face."

To the citizens of the Kingdom of Asura, being 10 years old was a critical point in their lives, and so turning 10 was a milestone of great importance. Though I

still don't know why it's so important, it's probably something like a lucky charm. A great celebration would be held, and even presents would be given.

"That doesn't matter. Eris' family had properly congratulated me, after all."

"I see. What did they give you?"

"An expensive staff. It's called the 『Arrogant Water Dragon King (Aqua Heartia)』^[1], though it's a bit of an embarrassing name."

"Really? Isn't it cool?"

Cool?

What kind of stupid things are you saying? Isn't it a name that sends shivers of embarrassment down your back?

Though in this world, it could be that the higher the performance of the item, the more extravagant the name it's given.^[2]

"And Rudi. I've heard from Alphonse, you know? You received just one other nice present, didn't you?"

"A nice present?"

Let's see... What did I receive, anyway?

Was it wisdom, bravery and infinite power?

I don't think I have enough of any of them, though.

"Come on, it's the Ojou-sama from Phillip's place. I saw her just a while ago, but isn't she quite the gallant and lovable girl? She'd tried to desperately protect you, you know..."

...Received.

I feel that it's a little off to say that.

No, I mean, certainly Phillip had said "Alright" and approved, but it hadn't gotten to a stage where I could say "Itadakimasu".^[3]

I want to cherish her.

There's the incident yesterday, too. It was the first time anyone had gently hugged me when I was down, and even stroked my head until I had fallen asleep.

I'll definitely never betray Eris.

There's also the promise about when I turn 15, but even if I turn 15 and she changes her mind, I can endure it. Though even saying that, I'll probably still run wild. In 4 years from now, when my sexual desires will probably be even stronger, I'm not really sure if I'll be able to hold it in though.

At the very least though, that's what I've decided for now.

"Eris is someone important to me. Though, still, to say that she was something I 'received' doesn't really sit well with me, you see."

"Well, you'd be marrying into her family after all. Rather than 'receiving', it's more like you'd be 'received', huh?"

"Heh?"

I let out a strange sound.

Marry^[4]?

"Well, with Phillip as a backer you're going to become a noble, right?"

"What kind of talk is that? When did you hear this?"

"When, you ask? Well, about a year before the teleportation, you know. That you and Eris were getting along, and that your feelings were firm, so a letter came about wanting to take you in as a husband, you know. Though I think that Asuran nobles are basically pieces of shit, but since it was something you decided, I'd replied in a letter that I'd let you do as you like, but..."

I see.

In other words, by the time I was 10, Phillip had already finished all the arrangements with Paul.

Had we not parted soon after that, there's no mistaking that over the next few years using this or that method, he'd have tried to pair Eris and I together.

Just what about this is something you'd talk about in a bar?

In other words, I can understand how Paul had come up with that kind of idea about Eris and I.

Two people who'd promised to get married. Two people who in their anxiety were unable to bear it.

Had we been lovers, then it couldn't be helped that it'd seem like we'd spent the journey flirting and making out.

"Going by the sound of things, it seems that Phillip had pulled a blind one over us."

"That seems to be the case, huh?"

The two of us sigh together.

Right now the same man's face is probably floating through our minds.

Phillip. A high ranked noble of the Kingdom of Asura.

A man with enough power to survive in the sordid place that is high society.

"And so your relationship with the Ojou-sama is pretty good. As for Sylphy... Ah, nah, it's nothing. Forget I said anything."

As if to say that his previous words were a slip of the tongue, Paul's words became ambiguous.

Sylphy still hasn't been found yet.

At least, according to the extent of Paul's knowledge.

Though he said that it was nothing, I think about it.

I like Sylphy.

However, it's a feeling that's a little different than those I have for Eris.

If I had to say it, she feels a lot like a little sister, or a daughter.

'She's been bullied, and she's pitiful, so I'd better take care of her'

It's a feeling like that.

There's also the fact that I stop any further feelings from taking root.

Though there's a similar kind of feeling with Eris, I've also been saved by her a number of times.

If I were asked which of them would take the victory, I'd give the victory to Eris.

However, it's not like this is a conclusion I've come to by judging them both fairly.

There's the issue of the time we've spent together.

As expected, the effect of spending a long time together is really strong.

Though there are a lot of things you can bring up about your childhood friend, it's basically because of the long time you've spent together with them.

I've spent twice the amount of time with Eris than I have with Sylphy.

What we did during that time was deeper as well.

Nevertheless...

It's a different story if you're asking whether or not I'm worried that Sylphy is missing.

"It'd be good if Sylphy was alive..."

"Though it wasn't to your extent, that kid really did her best. I mean, she can even use chantless healing magic. She's sure to be alive somewhere. Healing magicians are quite valuable outside of the Milis Continent."

"Is that so...?"

...Mn?

Just now I just heard something outrageous.^[5]

"Please wait a moment. Sylphy can use chantless healing magic?"

"Mn? Yeah, Zenith was surprised. But, you can use it too, can't you Rudi?"

"I can't do it with healing magic, you know."

I can't use healing magic without chanting.

I can't understand the principal after all.

No matter how much I use it, I can't understand the mechanism behind healing a wound with mana.

"Is that so?"

"Yeah. I can use it if I chant but..."

"Well, though I don't really know about magic in detail, they do say that there's such things as affinities after all. Perhaps Sylphy has talent in that area?"

Perhaps in the time that I haven't seen her, Sylphy has become much stronger than someone like me.

It'll be a bit scary to meet her again, huh?

If she says something like,

'Rudi, you haven't grown at all, huh?'

what should I do?

While we were talking about various things, the distance between Paul and I completely disappeared.

Part 2

Around evening, someone greeted Paul.

It was the Onee-san in the bikini armor, and the healing magician Onee-san. Today she wasn't wearing a bikini; she was dressed like a normal town girl. Just what was that yesterday?

Well, it was also one of the causes of the argument, so she may have been showing prudence.

"Tou-sama."

"What is it?"

"Of course I believe in you, Tou-sama, and there's also the matter from yesterday, so I'll just be asking to make sure. You haven't been cheating, right?"

"Course I haven't."

I see.

Then I'm relieved.

The fight I had with Paul yesterday was one of clashing suspicions.

It was the result of prodding at each other's weakness with women, without any facts.

Oop, bringing up something that 'never happened'. No good, no good.

Well, it seems that Paul hasn't had the free time to care about women.

The collapse of his family hasn't triggered anything either.

I should follow his example and hold back my perversion for a while.

At the end, to confirm my intentions, Paul asked,

"Rudi. You said you were going to guard Eris, and escort her to the Fedoa region,

right?"

"Yes."

While nodding strongly at those words, I reply.

"Or would it be better if I participated in the search as well?"

"No, there's no need for that. Whatever road you take, it'd be better to escort a member of Boreas back to the Kingdom of Asura, you see."

"...It sounds like it's quite important. Is it really okay to leave it to me?"

"There shouldn't be anyone better suited for it than you. There's also the fact that she trusts you, right?"

It seems like she trusts me. I suddenly think this, but I wonder if Paul isn't overestimating me.

No, however he evaluates me, I want to live up to his expectations.

"Even so, it's not like you'd remain in Milishion no matter how many people guarded her instead, right?"

While grinning, Paul said something easy-going^[6].

Considering only loss and gain, that would be an acceptable option too.

Of course, I wouldn't be staying in Milishion; I'd be parting with Eris and searching independently.

Returning to the Magic Continent and searching there from now on is also an option.

However, in the end, this isn't something I can consider just as loss and gain.

There's no way I'd prioritize anything that involved leaving Eris behind.

I have to protect her.

Moreover, I don't have any good memories about leaving something halfway done to start on something else.

In my previous life, I had left everything half done.

There's no mistake that both would be left halfway done.

In this case, it'd be heading to the Magic Continent without escorting Eris to the end, and leaving things without having succeeded in anything.

In that case, I'll do them one at a time.

There's also Ruijerd's matter.

It doesn't seem that someone straight-laced like him would get along well with the search party, and he might have a falling out halfway, saying something about how these actions were not suitable for a warrior, and then getting mad.

"No, I think it'd be best after all if I escort her."

"Well, there's no one stronger than you in our group, and you wouldn't be able to leave things to someone else, either."

While saying that, Paul makes a complicated expression.

It might be that he's bothered about losing to me in a fight.

I had thought that it didn't count because he had been drinking though, and I'm not really in a position to console him.

I'll just leave this alone.

"How long until you depart from Milishion?"

"Let's see. Since I want to save up travel expenses, it might be about a month."

"If it's travel expenses, then I have some."

Paul turns his head towards the of the two women. It's the robe wearing healing magician Onee-chan. She's freckled, and seems like quite a meek girl. Paul calls out to her.

"I did, right?"

"There's money entrusted from Alphonse-sama for the sake of searching for the Boreas family."

It seems that Alphonse had said that it was for when anyone was found in Milis, so that they could travel comfortably, he'd leave some money with Paul.

"And that's how it is."

"I see. It's great that the money didn't disappear as alcohol expenses."

"Shera's been looking after the funds, after all."

It's pathetic that my father is saying this boastfully.

I won't say it.

"And so, how much is it?"

"It's the equivalent of 20 Royal Notes."

When I ask Shera, I receive an immediate reply.

Royal notes are Milis' largest currency denomination.

Using ¥1 = 1 stone coin as a reference, it'd be ¥50,000 per note.

There are 20 notes.

In other words...

"ONE MILLION YEN!"

"...What kind of reaction is that?"

Paul looks confused.

I'm dizzy from the money.

Anyhow, this half year...

I, who have been thinking about nothing but money issues, like a miser.

Such a person has suddenly been given ¥1,000,000.

"That much money... Isn't that enough to play around your whole life!?"

"Well, though I think it'd be enough to build a house in the south, it's not enough to play around for a lifetime, you know."

Ehhh, but it's ¥ 1,000,000, you know. ONE MILLION, YOU KNOW.

It'd be 1,000 Green Mineral Coins!

It'd be enough for a Supard to ride a ship!

Oh. While I'm being happy, one more question comes to mind.

"Ah, I have one more question."

"You still have more?"

"Yes. Though we had wanted to put a Supard on a boat at Windport, the voyage expense was huge. Though I don't know how much it'd be at Westport, it certainly seems like it'd be a lot. Would 20 Royal Notes be enough, or...?"

"So it's about that, huh...?"

Paul had crossed his arms over his chest.

He's not going to say something like 'Leave Ruijerd behind' is he?

"Shera. How much money is needed for a Supard to cross the sea?"

Paul had suddenly asked her. Shera nodded in acknowledgement^[7].

"It would take 100 Royal Notes." she replied.

Could it be that she's memorized it all?

It was like that before as well, so she seems quite exceptional.

From her appearance she seems quite like a secretary.

"...!"

Though when our eyes met, she let's out a small scream and looked downward. The former-bikini person casually positioned herself between Shera

and my line of sight. I'm a little shocked.

"Sorry. This girl is a bit bad with gazes. Please don't look at her too much."

"Right..."

The former-bikini person explains as such, and I have a vague response.

Though things are normal with Paul now, am I still hated by the other group members?

Well, it's fine.

Still, 100 Royal Notes.

That's about ¥5,000,000.

It's not an amount that you can easily save up.

I let out a sigh.

"Why is it only the Supard race that has such a high fee?"

"That's because the law was formed when the persecution of the Supard race was most severe."

From behind former-bikini, Shera replied naturally.

She replied readily, even without knowing about the person at the Windport checking station.

Though her boobs are small, she's got quite the brain, huh?

"Moreover, the noble presiding over that customs house is famous for hating the Magic Race. Even if you save up a stack of money, you might be stopped one way or another."

"Is that so... Um, could nothing be done with the power of Kaa-sama's family?"

"Sorry, but we're already treading a fine line with them. It wouldn't be good to trouble them any further than this."

In other words, smuggling again?

We have some bad memories with smuggling, so if possible I don't want to rely on it.

It's something that happened on the same continent.

It's possible that due to the links between the smugglers, we've already been blacklisted.

The more I think about the Supard voyage fee, the bigger the headache I get.

"I understand. Regarding the voyage expense, I'll do something about it myself."

"Sorry."

Saying that, Paul had grinned widely.

He then turned his head with a proud look, towards the two women waiting behind him.

"How about him? My little man. He's quite reliable, huh?"

"Hahhh"^[8]

"Umm..."

The two women exchange a wry smile.

Even if you ask that, just who was it that had been in a disgraceful argument with that son?

"Tou-sama. Please stop doing vulgar things like asking a lady about how your 'little man'^[9] is. People will suspect the Greyrat family of being vulgar."

"The way you're saying things is even more vulgar, you know."

Saying that, the two of us laughed together.

Though the two women drew away from us, we didn't care.

"Now then. Rudi, it's about time that I go."

"Yes."

Paul stands up and taps me on the shoulders.

It seems that we'd been talking for quite a while.

When I look towards the counter, I saw that the bar-owner was smiling wryly.

We'd stayed here through lunchtime as well, after all.

I'd better tip him a little.

"When you've decided on the plan for your journey, get in touch with me. Let's eat together with Norn before you leave."

"Yeah, I understand."

Saying that, I saw Paul off.

I was looking at Paul's back as he left the bar with the two women.

Seeing this I thought that he really was a womanizing, useless father.

Part 3

A while after Paul left, Eris and Ruijerd returned.

Eris had a large bruise near her eye, and Ruijerd was making a complicated face.

"What happened, you two?"

"Nothing. So, what happened with that man?"

As if to say she was extremely displeased, Eris folded her arms and snorted.

"We made up."

When I said this, Eris' eyes immediately narrowed^[10].

"Why!?"

She smacks her clenched fists on the table.

The table broke with a huge noise.

Mn, well, it was quite powerful...

"I see. So you made up, huh?"

In response, Ruijerd looked glad.

"Rudeus!"

Eris had grabbed me by the shoulders.

She's tightening her grip.

Her strength is absurd.

"Why!?"

"What do you mean by 'why'?"

I ask, a little confused.

"Yesterday, weren't you completely depressed!?"

"Yeah. You really helped me yesterday. Thanks to your hug, I managed to calm down quite a bit."

That I could look at Paul's face today was also unmistakably thanks to Eris.

Had it not been for that hug, I might have secluded myself in my room for a while.

"That's not it! That man didn't show up to your 10th birthday either, Rudeus! Not only that, the journey through the Magic Continent was really tough! You were even thrown into jail in the Great Forest! And then, finally, even though you finally managed to meet him, he did something like that! You said that he rejected you, right!? Why are you forgiving him!?"

Eris had spoken in one breath.

I understand her point as well.

Certainly.

If you say it like that, Paul was the worst.

Had he declared that he hated me, I would have believed it.

Had I been a normal child, I'd probably have never forgiven Paul.

However, it can't be helped that Paul had failed in regards to me. I've inherited my memories from my previous life, and have always done things well. Towards such an irregular son, it'd be unreasonable to expect him to interact normally. Paul has trouble grasping the distance between us, and is troubled over how to treat me.

Moreover, despite the things I say, there are still various things I don't know

about how a proper father should be.

I don't think that this is anything bad.

To me, from the standpoint of a son, a father is just someone who watches over and protects you from above.

To me, it doesn't matter how many times Paul fails.

My heart isn't broken anymore.

Though, there's still the fact that we parted ways immediately.

"Eris."

"What...?"^[11]

I'm troubled over what I should say.

Eris is angry for my sake.

However, it's something that is already settled to me.

"Tou-sama is just one person. He'll make mistakes too."

I said this, and then used Healing on the bruise near her eye.

Though Eris had obediently allowed me to heal her, looking at her expression, I understood that she hadn't accepted this.

When I had finished treating her, she sulkily returned to her room in the inn.

While watching her go, I asked Ruijerd a question.

"So, Ruijerd-san."

"What is it?"

"What's with that bruise?"

The bruise near Eris' eye.

She didn't have that yesterday.

"I had difficulties in stopping her."

He spoke calmly.

Normally he'd fly into a rage about people hitting children, but it seems that his mind had changed.

Eris had probably been violently struggling because she couldn't forgive Paul no matter what, but she and Ruijerd have a student and teacher relationship. Because of their training, this isn't the first time Eris has been injured.

No, look carefully.

Ruijerd's expression.

It's not actually calm.

He's not a man who makes a lot of facial expressions, but right now it's a little bitter.

It seems he was reluctant.

I guess there's no helping it, huh?

Whether it's what happened, or what kind of conversation they had, or what kind of circumstances there were, I don't know any of it.

However, there's only one thing I can say.

That Ruijerd and Eris were at odds with each other was my fault.

I was able to reconcile with Paul.

In that case, what I'll say is my thanks.

"Thank you very much. Thanks to you, I was able to reconcile with Tou-sama."

"No reason for thanks."

However, right now Ruijerd can't stop Eris without hitting her.

Without me knowing, she's gotten steadily stronger, huh?

Part 4

A while after that, we had our strategy meeting.

"Well then, let's begin the second strategy meeting since arriving in Milishion."

The location is the bar.

Thinking about it, today I haven't moved one step from the bar.

This bar is comfortable. There aren't many guests, as well.

"Didn't we have one just the day before?"

Eris isn't angry anymore.

I had thought that she'd be shutting herself up in her room, sulking, but she came back after about 10 minutes.

The speed at which she's able to switch moods is something that I'd want to learn.

"The situation has changed. Specifically, we no longer need to earn money. As a result, I think we should leave Milishion in the near future."

Receiving 20 Royal Notes means that we don't need to work for money anymore.

As for information gathering, I've heard what I needed to from Paul.

Regarding the Supard race's reputation, for the moment we'll be putting it on hold.

What this means is that the number of things that we can do in this town have decreased to almost nothing.

I summarize this to them.

Regarding the situation in the Fedoa region, I had been hesitant in discussing it with Eris.

However, I braved it and told her.

Rather than getting to the scene of the incident, and then tasting despair, it'd be better to prepare ourselves, starting now.

"Eris, it seems that our home town doesn't exist anymore."

"Right."

"It seems that Philip-sama and Sauros-sama still haven't been found either."

"It can't be helped, huh?"

"We basically don't know Ghyslaine's whereabouts either, and it's possible that..."

"You know, Rudeus..."

Eris crossed her arms, raised her chin and looked at me.

"I've already prepared myself for that much."

There was no hesitation in Eris's eyes.

They were eyes that as usual, held great strength, arrogance, and not a single doubt about her future.

It's not that she had forgotten, but that she had prepared herself.

That's what she had said.

"Though I think Ghyslaine is alive somewhere, it wouldn't be strange if Otou-sama and Ojii-sama are dead, huh?"

She said with a snort.

In other words, because it was tough for her when she had been teleported to the Magic Continent, she had already anticipated that others might have died. The situation should be something like that, huh?

No, she might be putting on a tough front.

It's hard to tell apart the times when she's putting up a front, and the times when she really does have confidence.

"After all, even though you'd been hiding it from me, Rudeus, I already knew it all along."

I have no idea what she had supposedly known, but I don't feel like she's putting on a front at all.

Eris has been in her own way, considering various things.

In other words, the person who had completely forgotten about Fedoa, was just me, myself.

It's kind of shameful, huh?

"Is that so? I understand."

As you'd expect of Eris.

While thinking this, I continue the conversation.

"At any rate, I was thinking that we'd leave town in about a week, but..."

"Are you fine with that?"

The one who asked that was Ruijerd.

"What's wrong?"

"Once we begin our journey, there's the possibility that you'll never see your father again."

"We've ended up talking about something pretty unlucky again..."

Because Ruijerd says it, the significance is a little different than usual.

Still, it's not like we're in a war at the moment.

On the contrary...

"Because there are family members who we might never see again if we don't search for them, I'd like to prioritize them instead."

"Is that so? That's right, huh?"

With Ruijerd assenting to this, we finally start on our main topic.

"For the rest of our journey, let's focus our activities on information gathering."

As expected, I think the amount of time we should stay in each town is roughly a week.

However, during that time we won't be earning money, but instead focusing on gathering information.

What we'll be looking for is primarily the teleported people.

The journey between Milis and Asura.

In this world, this is the journey with the largest number of travelers, and the largest number of merchants; it's this world's Silk Road.

Naturally, there are probably members of the search party investigating along it.

However, there's the possibility that perhaps we might be able to find something that our predecessors hadn't.

Redeeming the Supard name we can do somehow or other, whilst carrying out this search operation.

However, the name 『Dead End』 isn't well known on the Milis and Central Continents.

We'd better have another thought about just how we're going to sell the Supard name.

"The problem is the voyage fee, huh?"

In this world, the act of crossing the seas itself has a special meaning.

Though there are countless ways of dealing with entry into another country when it's a land route, it's only the seas that are difficult to cross.

Especially for a Supard.

"Regarding that, Rudeus, have a look at this."

What Ruijerd produced was a single piece of paper.

It was the envelope from yesterday, that I had given up on trying to see.

I take it and have a look.

The words 『To Duke Baqciel』 are scrawled across the front.

On the back is a seal of red wax.

The design on it might be a family crest.

It gives a truly unrefined feeling.

"This is?"

"It's something that an acquaintance of mine wrote for me, yesterday."

An acquaintance.

Now that it's mentioned, Ruijerd did say that he'd be going to meet with an acquaintance.

"What kind of person is your acquaintance?"

"A man named Gouache Brush^[12]."

"What's his occupation?"

"I don't know. He seems pretty important."

I'm told that he met Gouache over 40 years ago.

It was on the Magic Continent.

Ruijerd had saved a group that was being attacked by monsters, and Gouache was among them.

At the time, Gouache was still a child and so looked on Ruijerd with fear and hostility, but it seems that by the time they had parted, they'd become relatively friendlier.

When he had finished escorting them to town, he was told that if he ever came to Milishion, he should visit, but because there was never the chance to, he had forgotten. However, it seems when we were circling the town to get to the Adventurers District's Entrance, he had suddenly seen with his 『eye』 and had remembered.★

As a result, he had felt that he may as well visit, but there was the chance that perhaps Gouache had forgotten. It seems that while carrying that anxiety in his chest, Ruijerd had approached him, but upon doing so, Gouache had remembered him as if a matter of course, and had greatly welcomed him.

Though he had planned to leave things with just a greeting, the two of them hit it off.

After talking about the journey up until now, it seems that he had said, 'Well then, when you get to Westport, show them this.'

Hitting it off with Ruijerd.

I wonder if he's someone a bit like Gustav?

Someone who'll immediately write a letter, and seems to be of important standing...

Hm, I want to try sneaking a peek inside, but it does certainly seem that breaking this seal will invalidate the contents of the letter, huh?

"This Gouache person is probably a noble, right?"

"He did have a lot of subordinates."

Subordinates.

It's quite a Ruijerd-ish way of putting things.

They're probably servants or something.

'A lot' is also quite vague.

Be that as it may, at any rate, he's Ruijerd's acquaintance.

It wouldn't be strange even if he turned out to be a Devil King candidate, aiming at the king.

"Did you go to his house?"

"Yeah."

"Was it big?"

"Pretty big, I guess."

"How big was it?"

"Not as big as the Kishirisu castle, I guess."

Kishirisu Castle.

For it to be smaller than this means that it isn't the White Palace in the middle of the lake.

It seems that as expected, they aren't royalty.

But it's something whose size is comparable, huh?

Hmmmm.

It's Ruijerd's acquaintance.

I don't think he'd be a bad person, but...

According to Paul, the noble in charge of the customs house hates the Magic Race.

If this acquaintance's standing is something half-assed, then there's the

possibility that handing over the letter will cause problems.

It might be better to find out who this Gouache person is.

No, but there's the happy expression that Ruijerd made when he produced the letter.

I'd hate for us to end up discussing trust again, after having come up with stupid ideas about Gouache.

Well, whatever.

At any rate, I can't think of any other way of doing things.

I'll just let Ruijerd save face here.

Then I'll secretly ask Paul about the name Gouache later.

"I wouldn't mind even if we left tomorrow though, you know!"

I smiled wryly at Eris' comment, and ended the strategy meeting.

Notes

1. The Kanji reads 'Arrogant Water Dragon King', so the implication is that it means 'arrogant water dragon king', but is read aloud as Aqua Heartia.
2. He means that because this world actually has magic, the items can actually live up to the name, and so unlike our world, extravagant names inspire awe and admiration, rather than a feeling of embarrassment for the person.
3. In Japanese, 'eating' is a euphemism for sex. It is like this in English too, where from 'I'll eat you up' you can infer 'I'll fuck you', but in Japanese the connection/relationship is a lot stronger.
4. "Marrying into her family" is literally "inserted husband", or like a husband who marries into the wife's family and takes her name. Basically he'd be marrying into the Boreas family. Anyway, what Rudi thinks here is actually "Husband?".

5. As in something that he 'can't let go without commenting on'.
6. Says 'amai', this could also mean naive.
7. Nodded while saying 'hai' (yes).
8. 'Haa' is a non-committal sound made in Japanese.
9. In Japanese 'son' (息子, musuko) is a way of saying 'dick'.
10. Says that the corner of her eyes raised.
11. Meant to sound as if sulking.
12. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gouache>

Chapter 49 - One Week in Milishion

Part 1

Because we had decided on our plans, I visited the inn Paul was staying in.

However, it seems like he's out.

The person there told me where the search party's headquarters were, and so I moved there.

It's just an average 2 story building.

In a place not unlike a conference room, Paul had been working quite seriously.

Together with 10 odd other men, he's discussing something or other.

When I try and listen in, I find that they seem to be working on some large project.

Since arriving in Milishion, I had only ever seen him drunk or hungover, but seeing him in the middle of work like this, that father of mine looks considerably reliable and cool.

We'd just met with bad timing, and it's not like he was spending everyday drinking and complaining.

Or so I had thought, but upon hearing the contents of their conversation, it seems that he had spent the last month binge drinking and never showed up at work at all.

In fact, it was only starting yesterday that he had suddenly become motivated again, and showed up to work like he did in the past.

There's probably no doubt that he wanted to show me his good side.

In other words, it's because of me that this guy is working.

Hahhh, dear me. Goodness, I'm such a sinful man.^[1]

For now, I'm just waiting until Paul has spare time.

Since just sitting there staring wouldn't get me anywhere, I look around the inside of the building.

In a certain room, I happen to spot Norn playing.

In her surroundings are other children of about Norn's age.

They had been happily playing with something similar to building blocks.

It's likely that this is a nursery or something.

"Hey."

Because our eyes had met, I casually raise my voice and call out to her.

When I did, she had made a startled expression, and then immediately glared at me and threw a block at me.

I catch it.

"Go away!"



It's a flat-out rejection.

Well then.

It seems that I've done something to make her hate me.

If it's just the things that I'm aware of, the incident where I hit Paul is about it.

Yep. There's no doubt it's that.

"Um, I've made up properly with Tou-sama, you know?"

I tried excusing myself, but...

"Liar!"

Norn said that in a loud voice, and then ran away without pause.

It seems that I'm really quite hated.

It's a bit of a shock.

I return to the defacto waiting room, and wait there a while for Paul.

When I take a seat in the corner of the room, glances came my way.

Among them are the kidnappers from the other day.

As expected, I really am hated, huh?

While I'm feeling uncomfortable there, an excessively flesh-colored and conspicuous person entered.

While I was wondering 'Just what happened to the plainness from yesterday?', donning a bikini armor she drew the surrounding gazes, and suddenly noticed me.

Now she's walking towards me.

"Good morning."

"Good morning. What are you here for today?"

With a smile, Bikini-san tilts her head questioningly.

"I've come to meet my father. Umm..."

Umm, what was this person's name again?

I haven't heard it yet, right?

"I haven't introduced myself yet, have I? Excuse me. My name is Rudeus Greyrat."

Standing up with an arm across my chest, I bow in the manner of a noble.

When I did, Vera became confused and moved her arms in a fluster and replied, "Ahm, uhm... I-, I'm Vera. I'm one of Paul-danchou's^[2] subordinates."

When I raise my head, I inevitably get a glimpse of the depths of her ravine.

It's poison for the eyes. And poison is sometimes used as medicine, and medicine is something that heals you.^[3]

It was just before I had decided to be reserved, and I didn't really want to see it, but it entered my line of sight no matter what.

No matter what I had decided in my mind, as though my sight was being urged on by a fox, it would be pulled towards a certain point.

How unfair.

"I apologize for the other day. My father is somewhat of a skirt-chaser, and so I had somewhat misunderstood."

"N-, no, no. It's fine. Because I'm dressed like this, it couldn't be helped."

Replying while keeping up appearances, Vera quickly shook her head.

And as she did, a certain part of her jiggled and shook.

Though it may be a bikini armor and technically does fix things in place, it can't stop the vibrations from being transmitted.

They're big, after all.

No, no...

...I somehow manage to tear my gaze away.

"I think it might be better if you didn't appear in front of men with that kind of appearance. It might be alluring to others. Would it not be better to at least put on an overcoat?"

"...There's a reason for this, so..."

Vera smiled bitterly, and said that.

It might be my imagination, but it feels like the gazes of the other group members are gathered on me.

Did I perhaps say something bad...?

I don't understand. I'll ask Paul about it later.

"Around what time does Tou-sama finish?"

When I change the subject, Vera tilts her head in thought.

"Umm, because the work from this past month has been piling up, I think he'll be busy for a while."

"Is that so...? For now, the plan is to leave Milishion in 7 days, so could you please relay this to him?"

"Seven days? That's quite hasty, isn't it?"

"It's normal for us."

"Is that so..? I understand. I'll bring Shera here. Please wait a little."

Saying that, she ran further into the building.

After a short time, she returns with the robed healing magician.

When she received my gaze, she let out a sound and hid behind Vera.

"The leader's schedule is packed, but he has time four nights from now. If you're planning to eat, please come at that time."

"I'm not really asking you to force a window though..."

"When the leader speaks to you, he's lively. That's why even if we have to force

it, please do come."

While hiding behind Vera, Shera replies in an uninterested tone.

She sure hates me, huh? No, it could be that she's afraid of me.

Though I'm a bit reluctant... well, whatever.

"Four nights from now, correct? I understand. Would it be better to head to the inn?"

"We've got reservations at the restaurant the group regularly uses, so please head there directly. The location is..."

And like that, Shera indifferently told me about the location and time.

It seems to be a restaurant called 『Rage Milis』, in the Commerce District.

I had asked just in case, but there doesn't seem to be a dress code.

Still, somehow the setting feels a bit like dining together with the president of an important company.

It feels like Paul's gotten quite important, having his schedule managed by a secretary.

"Will you be bringing a companion?"

At the end I was asked that, and though I suddenly thought of Eris, at the same time I recalled the line "I'll beat him to death".

"No, I'll be coming alone."

With that, I had finished making an appointment, and I left the building.

Part 2

Now then. One week is short. I have to use it meaningfully.

While thinking that, I went to the Milishion Adventurers Guild.

As expected from a place called the headquarters, it was a fairly large building.

It was a 2 story building, and was the largest of all the Adventurers Guilds I'd ever seen.

Though I say that, I've seen plenty of large buildings before, so I'm not really that moved.

First is information gathering.

For now, the main topic is the issue of the Fedoa region. Nevertheless, I didn't find any information that I hadn't heard from Paul already. In other words, the one most informed about this in these parts is as expected, Paul's search party.

What I searched for next was information on the monsters in the Milishion area. There was a large difference in the threat level when compared to the Magic Continent.

The 'Giant Locust' is a big locust, the 'Meat Cut Rabbit' is a carnivorous rabbit, and the 'Rock Worm' is a large earthworm *etc. etc.*

The number of extremely weak monsters is high.

Compared to the Magic Continent, the size of the monsters are small as well.

In the lands that we had braved, it was common to find monsters whose size were many times that of a human's.

Even the Pax Coyotes that we had hunted to extinction (exaggeration) were more than 2 metres long.

Things like the Acid Wolf were greater than 3 metres in size.

Even the Great Tortoise was on average 8 metres from front to back, and the largest ones were over 20 metres.

The monsters I'd seen in the Great Forest during the rainy season as well, were monsters that were about the size of a human.

Compared to that, the size of the monsters in the surroundings of Milishion were only about as tall as a person's knee.

Though it's not to say that the greater the size, the stronger they are, but their size is basically their only weapon.

In conclusion, the monsters in the Milishion area are weak. This area is safe.

Next I think about how to redeem the reputation of the Supard race.

However, it's difficult.

This is because there's a faction in Milishion that is trying to expel the Magic Race. The ones guiding this are one of the holy knight orders of Milis; the Order of the Temple. They loudly call for the Magic Race to be expelled from the Milis Continent.

Though I say this, the one who holds the most influence in Milishion isn't that faction.

The head of the faction that advocates coexistence with the Magic Race is the Pope incumbent, and so the Order of the Temple isn't openly trying to expel the Magic Race.

However, should a Magic Person cause a problem in town, these knights will immediately come flying in to blame them.

Even if their position is weak, as long as they have a just cause, they'll come

down strongly on the Magic Race.

If we assert that Ruijerd is a 『Supard』 and do things on a large scale, it's probable that the Order of the Temple will immediately have their eye on us.

The city is always under the watch of the Order of the Temple.

In that case, how about outside the city then?

While thinking this, I accepted a certain quest.

The requests posted were mostly B rank, and this was one of those.

It seems that in the neighboring town, a monster was running wild.

It's in a place that is close enough for me to make a day trip.

The target for subjugation is an emerald green tiger; the Leaf Tiger^[4].

Normally it's a monster that inhabits the southern parts of the Great Forest.

For some reason it's moved south and settled down close to the town.

Because it's fur is an erratic green pattern, with parts that are a brown pattern as well, when inside a forest it completely blends in with the scenery.

Because of the difficulty in detecting it, coupled with the fact that it moves in groups, it gained a B rank designation.

However, right now the target is a single leaf tiger, and moreover is on a plain field, you could say it's even less dangerous than an acid wolf.

Using the ranking system to describe it, at best it would be a D rank.

Finding a request like this during the time I was on the Magic Continent would have been cause for delight.

When I quickly make my way there, the timing was just right because the tiger was holding a chicken in its mouth, and was leisurely leaving the village.

Noticing me, it dropped its prey and growled at me, but Eris had just said 'Leave it to me' as she began running, and in the blink of an eye it was cut perfectly in two.

The request really was completed too quickly.

The villagers were very thankful towards us.

Lately, the tiger had been acting violently in the area, and a number of villagers and livestock were injured.

It seems that usually one of the holy knight orders would come to defend the town.

However, it seems that just a few days ago, there was an incident where a shrine maiden had been attacked nearby.

It seems that with the exception of the commanding officer, all the members of the Order of the Temple that had composed the guard unit had been killed, and the shrine maiden had just barely been saved, but the responsibility for the defeat of the unit lay with the commanding officer, and so he had been dismissed.

In the first place, lately there had been a lot of suspicious kidnapping incidents, and because the knight orders were becoming tense, this kind of incident had occurred. Because of that, both the religious order and the knight orders had their hands full.

Thus, the knights had left the dangerous B ranked monster problems to sort themselves out, and with no other choice, requests were sent out at the Adventurers Guild.

Well, the problems of the knight orders or whatever are none of our business.

Now then, with the information I've obtained, I'll begin my experiment.

I'll publicize the Supard race here.

Ruijerd is actually a Supard, and so that the Supard can get along with people all around the world, we're travelling around and piling good deeds.

The Supard clan is a race that's daunting upon first glance.

Thus, I create a stone statue.

If you look at this, Ruijerd's name is mentioned, and no matter how scary the Supard look, in the blink of an eye their attitude towards the Supard will soften, and like a stubborn grandfather looking at their grandchild, their expressions will relax.

After a few minutes they'll probably end up as soul brothers of a hundred years.

Even if I say so myself, it's a perfect sales pitch.

However, the village head had a complicated expression on.

Though he was grateful to Ruijerd as an individual, something of this level wouldn't remove the prejudice against the Magic Race, and as a follower of Milis, he was reluctant to have a statue depicting a Magic Person.

I was told this, and the statue was rejected.

My experiment hadn't gone well.

As expected, it seemed that things couldn't be solved in one go like that.

Or perhaps as expected, it wouldn't do unless it was a bishoujo figurine?

Should I start making gender-bent Ruijerd figures from now on?

No, there'd be no point then, huh?

"You made this kind of thing, huh...?"

On the way back to Milishion, Ruijerd had taken a long look at the figurine and

strongly praised it.

"That's right! Rudeus is great at this sort of thing, after all!"

Then, seeing the figure, for some reason Eris said that in a boasting manner.

Though it was rejected this time, my figurines sell for quite a high price.

My figures of the Beast Race Sword King had caught the eye of some country's prince after all.^[5]

It wouldn't even be exaggerating to say I was a royal purveyor.

While thinking about things like this, I was feeling proud but...

"However, this stance is full of openings, huh?" said Ruijerd.

"That's true. The stance is no good, huh? It has to be lower..." said Eris.

In the end, the figurine was no good.

Nyooo~n.^[6]

Part 3

Three days later, the day before the dinner appointment.

Although I'll be having dinner with my family, I don't have any clothes to wear.

There's no real dress code, but the clothing I'd bought on the Magic Continent are seen as quite shabby in these parts.

Thus, I'm browsing clothing shops with Eris.

It's a date, so to speak.

Though I say this, it's nothing that romantic.

Eris is looking for clothes to buy, she isn't that active about it, and it feels like she's fine with buying whatever.

Because she's like that, I'll be choosing clothing for her as well.

From now on is the domain of the Human Race.

We'll be judged according to their tastes, after all.

At the very least, I want to be presentable enough that we aren't ridiculed at first sight.

If there was at least one person here who knew the latest fashion trends, we could ask them for advice but...

Among my acquaintances, there's basically only the monkey-faced newbie or Vera, but I don't know where the monkey-faced newbie is, and I don't know Vera well enough to ask her for a favour.

We could probably ask the shop clerks at the more expensive stores for advice, but the clothing in those kind of stores probably don't cater to adventurers.

It'd be awkward to go in and ask for advice, and then leave without buying

anything.

If we owned a set of those kind of clothes, it might possibly come in handy, but we might also never use it. Thinking this, I can't help but feel awkward.

Because of Paul's assistance, we have money, but I don't want to squander it away either.

Thus, we started watching the people walking down the road, and decided to decide on what to buy based on that.

Although my hobby is observing humans, Eris and I are sitting on the side of the road and people watching^[7].

It's just to a certain extent, but it seems like a lot of people are wearing blue clothing.

Additionally, there are both those who don outerwear, and those that don't.

Because the climate is good, the outerwear is thin as well.

"It seems the fad these days it to wear blue, huh?"

"Blue wouldn't suit you, Rudeus."

Eris immediately rejected the idea.

Well, I'm not exactly eager to follow the latest fashion trends, but...

"Then, what would you say suits me?"

"Didn't Gisu give you something? That one was good, you know."

That fur vest, huh?

However, the size is a little big.

Because it's longer than necessary, it ends up looking like a coat.

That said, though it's not uncomfortable, and I'd wear it on cooler days, still...

"Though that vest isn't bad, it's a little too long, huh?"

"Right. It really is a bit long, huh? What if you cut it?"

"That'd be a waste. I'm growing after all."

While having such a conversation, I decided on what to buy.

As expected, Eris and I don't care much about fashion, and the fact that we didn't take long to shop is an indication of that.

Or so I thought, but near the end Eris bought a black dress.

It's made from a black material with a white rose embroidery, and is quite the stylish dress.

"Eris, did you buy that?"

"...What? Do you have a problem with it?"

"No. I think it suits you."

"Hmph. It's not like I need compliments."

With that conversation, we finished that day's shopping.

Part 4

The day of the dinner appointment.

When I had mentioned that tonight I'd be having dinner with Paul and my family, Eris began saying that she wanted to come too.

Had it not been for the incident the other day, I would be saying 'by all means', but Eris is still holding animosity towards Paul. Enough that you could call it 'killing intent', it's quite a strong hostility. It's not that I can't understand her feelings, but I've already decided to get along with Paul.

If that was it, then I'd be trying this or that to reconcile them, but as far as things go, tonight is the first time in years that it's just been our family. My relationship with Norn hasn't improved either. That's why I have Eris sit this one out.

Wearing new clothing, the new me - 'Newdeus', heads to the restaurant.

I try my best to avoid passing through alleyways. There are a lot of kidnappers in alleyways, and in certain places, there's also a lot of bloodshed. It'd be terrible to dirty my clothing with blood.

There's plenty of danger on the main streets as well. Because it's dinner time, there are a lot of people who have bought things like yakitori walking around. If they bumped into me, it'd splatter all over. That much is obvious. Thus, I had unsealed my mystic eye. While seeing things a second ahead in time, I magnificently avoid the crowds of people.

I arrive.

Because there had been something like 'reservations', I had been on guard, but it was actually an extremely normal shop. It was a bar unaffiliated with an inn. There seemed to be a lot of townsmen in it, and it didn't give off a dangerous atmosphere to the customers.

I enter the shop, give the waiter my name, and they guide me to a seat. Sitting there is a bitterly smiling Paul, and a frowning Norn.

"Sorry. Was I late at all?"

"No... Sorry about this; Shera had been kind of enthusiastic about this for some reason. I had told her that the normal bar would be fine, but..."

"Isn't this fine on occasion?"

While saying this, I took a seat.

Norn is ignoring me.

"Come on, Norn. It's your Onii-chan, you know. Greet him."

"Don't wanna. I don't want to eat dinner with the person who beat up Otou-san."

"Come now, you shouldn't be saying something like that, right? I did something bad, so I was hit."

"Otou-san didn't do anything wrong."

Norn's cheeks were puffed in anger, and was sulking in a truly adorable way.

"Your Onii-chan and I have already made up. Right, Rudi?"

"Of course. If you wanted, I could even kiss you."

"Eh?"

"Eh?"

'Are you saying you'd hate to be kissed by your son?'

Though I had thought that, I'd hate to be kissed by my old man as well.

It was a slip of the tongue.

"Come on, we've made up. You should get along with your Onii-chan too, Norn. Okay?"

"Don't wanna."

Paul is patting Norn on the head.

Her hair is a beautiful blonde.

Looking at this hair brings Zenith to mind.

When there was something she didn't like, Zenith would also pout like this and trouble Paul.

This might be something that Norn had inherited.

Though for a while Norn was obediently being patted by Paul, she's definitely still glaring at me.

Her eyes are a bit upturned.

It might be that she's trying to threaten me, but all she manages to do is look cute.

"Otou-san has been trying really hard, you know."^[8]

"Yeah. I'm aware of that."

"He hasn't been playing around with women at all, you know."

"I have heard. I'm truly sorry for doubting him."

"He's also really nice to me, you know."

Tears are gradually forming at Norn's eyes.

Crap.

Did I say something mean, perhaps?

Crying is a bit...

"Otou-san always looks like he's going to cry, you know!"

"...Is that so?"

"Nah, I mean, recently, you know...?"

Because Norn is about to cry, Paul and I converse confusedly.

"Otou-san is really pitiful, you know!"

"..." "

"Hitting him like that, you're horrible, you know!"

Seeing this, I had let out a deep sigh inside.

Paul and Norn were teleported together.

I'd heard about what had happened.

While traveling, Norn had gotten sick, and it seems that they'd been attacked by monsters.

The one who had been protecting her was Paul.

Separated from her mother, separated from her maid, separated from her little sister, with anxiety wrenching at her heart, only Paul was there for her, and he was the only family she could rely on.

And then suddenly a man appeared, and in a mounted position, had been beating up Paul.

It's something that could leave quite a trauma.

"Norn, that was, I(otou-san) was..."

"It can't be helped, Tou-sama."

At least if she were a bit older, we might have been able to reach some understanding through discussion.

However, at this age things would be quite difficult.

That both of us had done something wrong, and that both of us had accepted and understood this... she's still too young for us to make her understand.

"Norn is still young, and moreover, if I were in her position, I wouldn't forgive the guy who beat up my father either."

It can't be helped that I'm hated by Norn.

We can just wait a few years, and discuss things with her then.

When the time comes, Norn will surely understand.

Though time is limited, it also has the power to settle things down.

However, it doesn't seem like Paul feels the same way.

"No. It's possible that it's only you two siblings left. You have to get along with each other."

'It's possible that it's only you two siblings left.'

When I realize what he means, I knit my eyebrows together.

"Tou-sama. Please don't say such ominous things."

"...You're right. Sorry."

Oop, no good.

The atmosphere has become heavy.

Okay. Time to change the subject.

"By the way, Tou-sama. What's the specialty of this shop? I skipped lunch today, and so I'm already starving."

Though I had plainly changed the subject, Paul seemed to understand.

While making an awkward smile, he answered.

"Mn, let's see. The stew made from the seafood caught in the ocean to the south is delicious. There's also beef. There are a lot of beef farmers in this area. There's quite a difference in taste to the beef in Asura, and there are a lot of stews but..."

"I'm looking forward to it. The meat on the Magic Continent was plain bad."

"Great Tortoise, was it? Monster meat is, you know, generally a crappy taste."

Like that, we begin to converse back and forth, but Norn is still ignoring me.

It can't be helped. Though it can't be helped, it's a bit disheartening.

It's because I'd recently made Paul an enemy.

My chest hurts.

I've done something bad to Paul.

"Come to think of it, Tou-sama, there's something I'd like to inquire about."

"What?"

"Do you know of a person called Gouache Brush?"

"...Nah, I've never heard of them. Where'd you hear the name?"

And with that, I had asked about the letter Ruijerd had brought back.

Because I had made a copy of the crest on the letter just in case, I show that as well.

"A sheep, a falcon, and a sword, huh? It should be one of the paladin families. But I don't recall having heard the name Gouache Brush. I don't know that much about the Milis nobles either, after all..."

"I see... Do you think Shera-san would know if we asked her?"

"I wonder... I'll try asking her later."

While feeling a little unease about the letter Ruijerd had brought, I end the conversation there.

After that are more trifling conversations.

We talk about birthdays.

It seems that since roughly a month before my tenth birthday, the monsters in the forest had become more active. It seems that because Paul and Zenith were

busy dealing with that, they hadn't had the free time to send me a present. It seems that they had finished dealing with the monster issue a day before my birthday, but when they started thinking about sending a present, they were teleported.

"By the way, what were you planning on giving me?"

"I was going to give you a gauntlet. I had thought a bit badly about it since it was something I had found inside our storehouse, but it was a magic item after all. It was as light as a feather, and though the size didn't fit me, I had thought that it'd fit you, Rudi."

"I see. So you had something like that as well."^[9]

"Yeah. Though Zenith had said that hers would be a secret, Lilia had seen her making a satisfied expression at a small locked box, so that was probably it."

"A box?"

I wonder what it was. I'm a little interested.

Still, no matter how much we talk about things I didn't get, nothing will come of it.

After this, the conversation ended up at the topic of Zenith's family.

The family that Zenith had come from was a distinguished family that had produced a number of excellent knights.

Zenith was as good as disowned, and so it seems the people I could call my maternal grandparents were not interested in searching for her.

However, it seems that they had completely changed their minds when they saw Norn.

No matter the world, grandparents are weak to their grandchildren.

"I wonder if we'd get more money if I showed my face as well."

"No, you'd probably have the opposite effect, huh..."

"...Right?"

Though I could fake the cuteness of a grandchild, it seems like I'd be inviting trouble.

I'd better not.

We had conversations like that, had an enjoyable dinner, and then I parted with Paul.

In the end, Norn had ignored me to the end but you can say that it was a fruitful dinner.

Part 5

And in the blink of an eye, a week had passed.

It's the day we're to set off, we're at the Adventurer's District's gate. I had gotten on a carriage, and just as I was thinking 'Alright, let's go' Paul had come to see us off.

"Rudi. It'd be fine to stay just a bit longer, you know?"

For some reason Paul had said something easy-going, but it's a bit late now.

"If we keep saying 'Just a bit', 'Just a bit', it seems like we'll end up staying for a whole year."

"You and Norn haven't managed to make up, after all."

"It won't be too late to worry about that after I find the other three."

Moreover... I glance at Eris.

Eris had been caught by the scruff of her neck, and was glowering at Paul with a demonic expression.

I had thought that she was quick to change her mind about things, but it doesn't seem like that's the case.

"It isn't just me that wants to meet their family, right?"

"I see. But the Boreas family is most likely..."

"Please stop."

As he spoke with a complicated expression, I interrupted Paul with my hand.

"There's the possibility that the information just hasn't come, and when we return to the Fedoa region, both Philip-sama and Sauros-sama have already

returned as well."

"...I see. That's true. But Rudi."

Paul spoke with a serious expression.

"Don't be too optimistic. Regarding Philip and the others returning home safely; with the scale of that disaster, who knows what's happened."

"What do you mean?"

Paul lowered his voice a little and said.

"I mean that for the sake of protecting himself, Philip's brother may have pushed all the blame onto one of the two."

When I hear this, certainly, it does seem like it's possible.

The feudal lord Sauros, and the mayor Philip.

The two of them were in charge of the region.

Even if they return safely, the burden of having lost their territory and their citizens will follow them around.

I don't know how nobles take responsibility according to Asura law.

However, at the very least, after the two of them return safely to their hometown, they probably wouldn't flaunt it as their ability as a lord.

There's also the possibility that the place where Philip's brother has escaped to might be closed up, and they might be murdered for the sake of crushing them politically.★

"If anything happens, protect that Ojou-sama. There might also be those who act on noblesse oblige, but it's nothing for you to worry about."

"I understand. I'll take your warning to heart."

My expression stiffened, and I nodded.

Paul makes a proud look, and nods as well.

"Also, regarding the writer of that letter, it seems Shera doesn't know either."

"I see..."

"She did say that she didn't think it'd be a dangerous person though."

"I understand. Please convey my thanks to her."

Paul nodded firmly.

And then, looking behind him, he calls out to the girl there.

"Come on, Norn. Say goodbye to your Onii-chan."

"...Don't wanna."

Norn was hiding behind Paul.

Half of her face is peeking out though. She's truly adorable.

In the future, she'll probably grow into a beautiful woman like Zenith.

"Norn. I don't know how many years later it'll be, but let's meet again."

"...Don't wanna."

Even until the end, Norn wouldn't turn her face to look at me.

While smiling bitterly, I returned to the carriage.

Like that, I left Milishion and began my journey.

Part 6

Paul

Rudeus has left on his journey.

As ever, he's quite the outstanding one.

Without reservation he decides on one thing, then the next, steadily taking action.

Elinalise had said that I lived at a fast pace, but I wonder what she'd say if she saw Rudeus.

I'd like for them to meet, but...

No, it'd actually be better if they didn't.

I don't wanna become Elinalise's papa or anything.

And while I was thinking about things like this, my shoulder was slapped.

When I turn to look, I find a monkey-faced man grinning at me.

"Yo, Paul. Done saying goodbye to your son?"

"Gisu..."

I can't thank this monkey-faced man enough.

Had it not been for him, my relationship with Rudeus would probably still be estranged.

"I've been in your care, huh?"

"No worries."

After saying that, I had suddenly realized that Gisu was wearing traveling clothes.

"What's this, Gisu? Where are you planning on going?"

"I haven't decided yet, but there's still a bunch of places that haven't been searched yet, right?"

With those words, I realized that Gisu was going to continue helping with the search.

It was quite the shock.

Gisu should have been the one most troubled by the break-up of our party.

He doesn't have fighting ability, and though he's a jack-of-all-trades, at the same time he couldn't really do anything; other parties wouldn't let him in, he wasn't able to independently complete requests, and so he was a guy who was left with no choice but to give up on being an adventurer.

It wouldn't have been strange if he was the one who resented me the most.

"Why are you going so far with your consideration, and helping me search?"

When I asked this, the corner of his mouth curved into his usual nihilistic smile.

"You'll jinx it, you know."

With his usual reply, he turned his monkey-face away from me.

I bring my hands to my hips and smile bitterly.

This guy believes in so many superstitions that I can't keep track of them all.

However, for some reason I feel pleasant, and I see Gisu off until I can no longer see his back.

"Alright."

I raised my voice in a roar, and gave Norn a piggyback.

I was overflowing with enthusiasm.

First I'll have to make sure the large-scale migration of the refugees is a success.

After that, I'll definitely find my family.

Having decided that, I returned to town.

Notes

1. The Japanese says 'Haa, yareyare, atekushittara tsumi na otoko da wa'. The 'wa' ending is feminine. Additionally, the 'atekushi' is a net slang corruption of 'watakushi'; a polite way of saying 'me'. 'tsumi na otoko' is literally 'guilty/sinful man', but 'tsumi na onna' (sinful woman) means something closer to a slut, or a woman who seduces everyone.
A joke you sometimes hear is when someone exclaims that they are, or accuses someone else of being a 'sinful woman', when random men all start falling in love with them and doing them favours, especially when the woman herself didn't intend on leading them on/seducing them.
The joke here is that Rudeus is saying that he's a 'sinful man(woman)' and claiming that men can't stop falling in love with him and trying to show off to him, even when Rudi himself isn't trying to attract them.
2. Danchou = group leader. When used standalone it is translate as 'leader'.
3. Meaning 'It's too alluring'. Literally says "be too much of a temptation, be bad for children to see"
4. Literally Green Leaf Tiger.
5. ed: Authorial goof! The wn says beast race sword king, but he hasnt made Ghyslaine's figurine yet. Author meant Roxy's figurine, of course.
6. にょろーん(´・ω・`) | <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8kRTldtYM4g>
7. This phrase comes up in Japanese media and stuff, so it sounds less weird than it would in English. Not to say that Japanese people find it normal (they don't), but at least it's a phrase/topic that's come up before. Sometimes as a pretext for stalking.
8. She ends her lines in 'da mon' for emphasis. 'you know' is added as a rough

English equivalent.

9. Says 'hehhh', which is a sound that indicates 'I see...' or 'Oh really?' that is used in various contexts. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g_RM8To5mjU&t=1m29s

Side Story - Eris' Goblin Suppression

Part 1

This is sudden, but let's talk about the boy known as Cliff Grimoire.

Cliff was now 13 years old; his age was right between those of Eris and Rudeus.

When he was old enough to understand what was going on, he was in an orphanage.

It was an orphanage in Milishion. It was an orphanage that could be said to be the symbol of the prestige and authority of the Milis religious organization.

There were no problems with the management, and the children were able to grow without worries and were sent off to foster parents.

When Cliff was 5, he was adopted by his current foster parent.

He was an old man named Harry Grimoire.

He was a person who held a high position in the Milis religious organization.

Before he had been adopted by Harry, Cliff had been receiving special education for gifted children.

In just a few years he had reached advanced rank in healing, detoxification and summoning magic.

In offensive magic as well, he had reached intermediate rank in all elements.

He was even more proficient in fire magic, and had reached advanced rank.

Cliff was a genius.

Praise rained down on him from all around.

Everyone had anticipated that he would surely become an amazing individual

when he grew up.

It could be described as a childhood quite similar to Rudeus.

However, unlike Rudeus who had retained memories from his previous life, Cliff was becoming impudent.

He had become conceited, as though he had no betters.

At any rate, even amongst his peers in the classroom, there was no one who could use as many different magics as Cliff.

There were those who had reached Saint rank in healing.

There were those who had reached Saint magic in detoxification.

However, only Cliff had reached Advanced level in all three.

Because of his diversity, there were those who began to call him a sage in the making.

Cliff grew even more impudent.

He gradually stopped listening to his teacher's words.

In the future, Cliff was to succeed his foster father in his occupation.

Cliff had understood this as well.

But even so, Cliff longed to become an adventurer.

Why an adventurer?

That was due to the influence of his days at the orphanage.

Many of those who had graduated from the orphanage became adventurers.

If the children at the orphanage weren't adopted by the age of ten, they would enter into a school managed by the Milis religious organization.

There, they would train for five years.

For example swordsmanship or magic, it was combat training. Like that, they would train for jobs that their talents suited.

Those who excelled in not only studying, but also swordsmanship and magic could become knights.

However, the majority became adventurers.

As a result, there were many adventurers among the orphanage alumni.

These alumni would occasionally come to the orphanage.

While greeting their former teachers, they'd also tell fun stories of their adventures to the orphans.

Hearing these, the orphans would yearn to become adventurers.

Cliff was no exception.

Of course, Cliff didn't think his dream would come true.

Though he longed for it, he also understood his own circumstances.

As an orphan, selfishness wasn't permitted.

He endured.

Indeed, in the beginning.

However, this stiff lifestyle accumulated resentment inside Cliff, and as the praise continued to be showered onto him, Cliff grew more arrogant by the day.

On a certain day, Cliff ran away from home and thought to register as an adventurer.

It was a bit of a test of his power.

There were even those amongst the teachers who as former adventurers would speak about their past boastfully.

'When I was young, I wanted to pile up experiences like that.' they would say.

He got ready.

With the staff that he received from his foster father on his 10th birthday in hand, he left the Sacred District and entered the Adventurers District.

On the way, he bought a robe like those magicians would wear.

It was blue colored. He headed to the Adventurers Guild.

If he registered as a healer, he'd probably be immediately found by the church^[1].

However, if he registered as a magician then it would be fine.

While believing foolish things like this, he finished the registration.

And like that, he was an adventurer, just like everyone else.

'A great adventure awaits me in a world I've never seen.'

He thought, and surveyed the surroundings in excitement.

Everyone was a brawny man.

He realized that everyone was something like a warrior or a swordsman.

Cliff had heard from his seniors at the orphanage that their parties had desperately needed a skilled magician.

That's why he had thought that if he called himself a magician, he'd immediately be able to enter a party.

Cliff had ignored the talk about adventurer ranks.

He had thought of parties as groups that didn't involve ranks.

Of course he had been rejected.

Bluntly rejected.

Over and over, rejected.

By the fourth time, Cliff's patience had reached its limits.

"Why!? Why can't I enter the party!?"

"Like I said, your rank is different."

"So what about my rank!? I actually have the strength of an A ranker! I said that because it couldn't be helped, I'd bear with partying with you lot, didn't I!?"

"What was that...? Don't get too carried away, you brat! Do you think a magician like you can win after picking a fight at this distance...?"

"You're not good for anything but swinging a sword around. Don't get carried away!"

"You shitty brat..."

Cliff was grabbed by the collar, and was thinking that if he showed his true power, he could drive them away somehow.

"Stop that. You're being childish, you know."

The one who interrupted them was a red-haired girl of about Cliff's age.

Part 1

Going back in time a little...

Eris Boreas Greyrat turned her feet towards the Adventurers Guild.

From an outsider's perspective, she was making a pleasant smile whilst quickly making her way down the main street.

She was dressed in her usual adventurers outfit.

Over her thick clothing were guards made of fur.

Over her fur pants were boots made of a thin but tough material.

At her hip was a sword, and at a glance anyone could tell that she was a swordswoman.

She wasn't wearing her usual hood.

If she wore the hood to the Adventurers Guild then she'd be mistaken for a magician, and strange men would approach her.

It was something she'd experienced countless times this past year.

Eris arrived in front of the Adventurers Guild.

The Milishion Adventurers Guild was at the end of the main road.

As expected of the headquarters, it was the largest building in the Adventurers District.

Without being overwhelmed by the awesome, and huge gate, Eris stepped inside.

Looking at the huge lobby, she unconsciously folded her arms.

Anyhow, it was even larger than the banquet halls in Roa.

It goes without saying that it was larger than all the Adventurers Guilds she had seen thus far.

If she were a young girl becoming an adventurer for the first time, in the face of such a spacious room, she might have shied away.

However, this was Eris.

She was an A ranker.

A competent adventurer.

She immediately began to walk towards her objective.

It was the request board.

It was far larger than other requests boards, and was overflowing with attached requests.

Eris looked at them, arms folded.

She wasn't looking at her usual B ranked requests, but was looking at the E ranked area.

There, she was looking for requests that were classified as Free Quests.

Free Quests were requests that were periodically issued by the nation.

The pay was lower, but because of its urgency, adventurers of any rank could accept it.

The reason Eris hadn't seen any on the Magic Continent was because there were no nations to speak of.

Amongst all the other requests, Eris had managed to single out the one she was looking for:

Free

- Job: Goblin suppression
- Reward: 10 Milisian Copper Coins per ear
- Job details: Culling goblins
- Location: Eastern Milishion
- Time limit: None in particular
- Deadline: None in particular
- Client name: Holy Knight Orders of Milis
- Notes: Beginners be aware of the hobgoblins that occasionally appear.
- Additionally, please do not tear off this request, and simply bring the gathered items to the counter.

Goblins were monsters that only appeared in the forests and plains.

Though they were humanoids and could use simple weapons, they couldn't comprehend human speech.

If there were just a few of them, it'd be fine to leave them alone, but if left to their own devices, they would steadily increase in population and start to attack the surrounding villages.

They were vermin, so to speak.

Be that as it may, because they lived in the forest and its surroundings, they acted as a natural defence against outbreaks of monsters from the forest.

Additionally, goblins were weak and so a young boy who dabbled in the sword was more than a match for one.

Making use of this fact, the Adventurers Guild prepared a reward suitable for beginners, and would prepare goblin suppression quests as a kind of introduction to suppression requests.

Also, though it was something Eris wasn't aware of, goblins were also used as a torture instrument for spies from enemy nations.

Due to the above reasons, the goblin population in Milis would be carefully maintained at a moderate level.

Now then, why would an A ranked adventurer like Eris, who could defeat the average C ranked adventurer barehanded, and whose strength had already been recognized by Ruijerd, be accepting such a request so late in her adventurer life?

There were two reasons.

First of all, it was simply one of Eris's dreams.

In the past, Eris had attended school for just a very short while.

Her male classmates had been huddled together, and talking about something.

That topic was about what they would do if they became adventurers.

First they would hunt goblins, and with money saved up from doing so, and whilst travelling bit by bit towards the southern region of the Central Continent, they would challenge themselves with dungeons and high ranked requests.

They spoke about that kind of dream.

Eris, who had been listening in from nearby, began to have delusions of one day doing so as well.

Her delusions began to swell, and then she approached the happily talking boys and told them to let her join in as well, but for various reasons they fought, and then she beat the three of them up.

After that, she dropped out of school and met Ghyslaine, and each time she

spoke to Ghyslaine her feelings about adventurers became stronger.

After meeting Rudeus, she was filled with dreams of going on adventures with him.

She would be a swordswoman, and he would be a magician.

They would challenge dungeons, just the two of them.

However, after going on a journey for real, it was different from her dream.

In particular, Rudeus was more cool-headed and pragmatic than she had imagined.

Because of the danger, not once did they approach a dungeon.

If she proposed goblin hunting, he'd probably ask "What for?" with a stunned expression.

Eris was a woman who had become an adventurer on the Magic Continent, after all.

He wouldn't be able to understand what meaning there would be in hunting goblins now.

But putting that aside...

Goblin hunting was number one on Eris's list of 『Things I want to do when I become an adventurer』.

Even if there wasn't any meaning in it, it was something she wanted to try.

That was the first reason.

As for the second reason... it's a secret.

"I wonder if I'd be able to return before the sun goes down..."

While looking at the requests, Eris was thinking of the time it would take to go there and back.

This time she would be travelling on foot.

It was still morning at the moment, but it would be better to do things with time to spare.

"...Hm?"

Incidentally by the F ranked requests, a certain memo was attached near the edges of the request board.

『Refugees from the Fedoa region, please contact the following address』

Without reading the rest, Eris moved her gaze away.

She had seen this memo at Saint Port as well.

Rudi hadn't spoken about the Fedoa region issue.

Eris had thought that Rudeus had been considerate of her, and had undoubtedly been trying to avoid worrying her.

Today's independent action as well was probably so that he could work out what to do about this matter.

'I wouldn't understand difficult matters' Eris had been thinking.

'Even if I don't think deeply about it, Rudeus has probably thought of something, so Rudeus will properly discuss it when the time comes.'

So thought Eris.

Never in her wildest dreams did she imagine that Rudeus hadn't even known about it.

"Now then!"

With the request confirmed, in high spirits Eris got ready to leave the guild.

All there was left to do was walk east, and then hunt the goblins. Considering Eris's current enthusiasm, she would probably even destroy one or two nests.

There wasn't anything left to stop her.

It was time to sing a requiem for the pitiful goblins.

"Why!?"

Or so it had seemed, but suddenly hearing a shout, Eris stopped her feet.

It was the voice of a young boy.

She casually looked towards the source.

A youth was encircled by men twice his height.

"Why can't I enter the party!?"

The shouting youth was wearing a blue coloured robe.

He was a bit shorter than Rudeus, and his hair was dark brown.

His eyes were hidden by long forelocks.

His staff wasn't as splendid as Rudeus' 『Aqua Heartia』^[2] either.

However, from the size of the mana crystal, it could be seen that it was still a staff made of expensive materials.

'My family is higher ranked than his, huh?' Eris naturally thought.

"I actually have the strength of an A ranker! I said that because it couldn't be helped, I'd bear with partying with you lot, didn't I!?"

Because of that arrogant manner of speaking, the men naturally became annoyed.

Even Eris would wallop him had those words been said to her.

"What was that...? Don't get too carried away, you brat! Do you think a magician like you can win after picking a fight at this distance...?"

"You're not good for anything but swinging a sword around. Don't get carried away!"

"What was that, you shitty brat...?"

Even caught by the collar, the youth still gave off an expression of composure.

However, Eris hadn't overlooked that his legs were shaking, if only a little.

Eris casually walked towards them, and placed herself between the two of them.

"Stop that. You're being childish, you know."

Had Rudeus been there, he would have been staring in wonder.

'Childish.'

They were words that you couldn't even imagine being said by the usual Eris.

Eris had gotten carried away by the mood.

'I'm an A ranked adventurer so I'm higher ranked than the angry men.'

'A man who's hurting a newbie, and me who's objecting.'

'So cool.'

It was that kind of mood.

"...Tsk. You're right. We were being pretty childish."

The man easily removed his hands from the boy.

Eris had already assumed that she'd get into a fight with the man, so she was a little disappointed.

"Let's go, guys."

The men had left, and only the youth remained.

With a composed expression, Eris awaited the youth's thanks.

'Thank you for saving me. Who are you?'

'I'm nobody famous.'

'At least give me your name.'

'Alright. Let's just go with Ruijerd of 『Dead End』.'

She had been thinking it'd go something like that.

Incidentally, it was something that Rudeus did on occasion.

"I never asked anyone for help, you know!"

The youth spat out these words, and Eris' proud expression froze.

"With my magic I could have worked out something of that level! Don't just decide on your own to butt in and settle things, ugly!"^[3]

The boy was lucky.

He had been knocked out in one hit, after all.

Not only that, but the men from before were still nearby.

Had it not been for their efforts in desperately stopping the enraged Eris, there's no doubt that the boy would have lost the two orbs that were most important as a man.

Part 3

Despite having become a little displeased, Eris had come to the gates of Milishion.

Though she was the type to change gears quickly, she was still unhappy.

As for why...

"Wait! Please wait!"

The youth who had been revived after fainting had come running after her.

"I'm sorry about before. I was a bit confused from the shock..."

The youth had said this and politely bowed his head.

It was because of this that Eris's mood could still be called "a little" displeased.

The boy had just barely managed to escape from death.

However, had it not been for fainting after one hit, then he probably wouldn't have been capable of doing something as vigorous as running after Eris.

"I'm Cliff. Cliff Grimoire!"

"...I'm Eris."

Eris had decided to give up on giving the name 『Dead End』.

She couldn't give Ruijerd's name to a person she had beaten up in impatience.

"Eris-san! That's a wonderful name! That outfit means you're a swordswoman, right!? By all means, please form a party with me!"

Dead centre in the middle of the road was Cliff, who was talking on and on.

Eris had been thinking to just go with the flow and knock him out, but for now she was enduring.

"Don't want to."

Eris turned away in a huff and walked away.

Honestly speaking, she wasn't used to this kind of person.

To continue to approach her even after being beaten up...

Of the people she knew, there was basically only Rudeus.

"Is that so? Then please, at least let me cover you from behind! People have been saying that I'm a sage in the making. I'll definitely be useful!"

Had Rudeus been here...

'Just who exactly is a sage in the making(lit. sage's egg)? At best you're an unfertilized egg, you virgin asshole!'^[4]

He probably would have spat out such insults towards the boy.

In his mind, at least.

Eris didn't say such vulgar insults.

'If you're an egg, then how about I break you to pieces and fry you sunny side up?' was all she had been thinking.

"I don't think even you've met a magician as strong as me, Eris-san. At any rate,

I'm stronger than your average A ranked magician after all."

Being told this, Eris became annoyed.

To her, the "strongest magician" was none other than Rudeus.

Rudeus was such a skilled magician that even Ruijerd had acknowledged him.

Though he was certainly A ranked, you couldn't lump him together with any run-of-the-mill A rankers.

"By all means, please confirm this with your own eyes!"

'Then I will have a look!' Eris had ended up thinking.

"Fine. Come along, then."

"Yes!"

And like that, Eris and Cliff left to hunt goblins.

Part 4

Seven goblins were burnt to cinders in an instant.

"How was that!? It was amazing, right!? An average magician wouldn't have been able to do this, you know!"

Making a face as if to ask 'How was that!?', Cliff looked over the annihilated goblins.

The goblins were completely carbonised, and were in a condition where you couldn't even collect their ears.

"Is that so? It wasn't amazing at all."

It wasn't a bluff.

Eris had meant it from the bottom of her heart.

Advanced Fire Magic 『Imprisoning Blaze Fire Bullet(Exodus Flame)』.^[5]

Eris had seen Rudeus using this before.

He hadn't spoken a long chant like Cliff had, and it was more powerful than Cliff's as well.

However, Rudeus would never have used such a magic against opponents as weak as goblins.

Had it been Rudeus, he would never have made the mistake of losing the goblin ears.

Also, until he had finished chanting, Eris had been fighting those goblins.

Because Cliff hadn't said anything to her when he had finished his chant, she

had almost been caught up in his attack as well.

Had it been Rudeus, there was absolutely no way he would have done something as dangerous as that.

"Eris-san, you don't really know much about magic, huh? Listen, okay? In the first place, magic is something that..."

Cliff began a long and drawn out explanation of the tiers of magic from elementary to advanced, and how the one he was using was advanced, and was advanced enough that even the men from before couldn't use it.

Of course, this was something Eris knew.

It was discussed in Rudeus's lessons, after all.

Not only that, but Rudeus's lessons were 10 times easier to understand than Cliff's explanation.

"Do you understand just how amazing I am now?"

'Should I hit him?' Eris had been thinking.

Even though it was the goblin hunting that she had been dreaming of for so long, because of this guy, things had been spoilt for her.

Because of that, Eris took an imposing stance with her arms crossed and spoke ruthlessly.

"That's enough. You don't seem to be of use, so just go home."

Had it been Rudeus, he probably would have chosen to retreat temporarily.

However, it seemed as though Cliff couldn't read the mood.

"What on earth are you saying!? You've been struggling to fight just a few goblins. There's no way you'd be able to do it alone!"

Before she had noticed, her fist had already swung towards him.

Cliff grasped his face, while his nose ran with blood.

He had immediately chanted Healing, and stopped his nosebleed.

"What are you doing!?"

"Tsk."

Eris had clicked her tongue.

Because it wouldn't do to leave someone knocked out in the plains, she had gone easy on him, but the result was that he was able to get carried away like this.

"Yeah, of course I understand. That you're strong, Eris-san, is something I reaaally understand. In that case, let's head into the forest this time. I can't show you my true worth by fighting goblins after all."

There were no ulterior motives to his words.

He wanted to show Eris how amazing he was.

However, it was definitely not the case of a boy wanting to show the girl he loved his cool side.

He had simply wanted Eris to be amazed at his powerful self.

"The forest is no good."

Eris spoke briefly.

The forest is no good.

It was something that Rudeus always said.

Moreover, Ruijerd would agree with it.

Thus, Eris obediently abided by it.

"Though you'd be the last person I'd expect to say this, Eris-san, are you afraid?"

"I'm not afraid!"

However, Eris was still a simple girl.

As long as you used such a line, she was easily swayed.

It wasn't acceptable to allow someone to look down on the Boreas family like they were novice adventurers.

"The forest, right!? Fine! Let's go!"

And so the two of them made their way towards the dim forest.

Part 5

"Even if we head into the forest, since it's Milis it's still no big deal, huh?"

While saying this, Eris was cutting down monkey monsters named Utans.^[6] They were D ranked monsters though, so they were no match for Eris.

"That's true. They aren't a match for me either."

Cliff spoke while again killing an Utan with intermediate wind magic.

Like that, they rapidly headed into the depths of the forest.

"Ah-"

Suddenly, Eris raised her voice.

"What's wrong, Eris-san!?"

With a happy expression, Cliff approached Eris.

Eris was openly making an unhappy face.

She then folded her arms, spread her legs shoulder-width apart, and overlooked Cliff with her chin raised.

"You. Do you know which way heads back to the city?"

"I don't."

Naturally, there was no way Cliff could know such a thing.

Because they had done this due to a sudden suggestion, they hadn't brought any equipment for entering forests.

"I see. Then we're lost, huh?"

Eris had calmly declared this.

Cliff had kept silent. And then, very quickly, his face became pale.

"W-, what should we do?"

Eris was calm.

Thus, Cliff had thought that she had some kind of idea.

However, deep down Eris had also thought that the situation was bad.

If those two found out that she had become lost in the forest, they'd be shocked.

They'd wonder why she entered a forest while hunting for goblins, and be shocked.^[7]

However, she would never show this in her attitude.

A lady of the Greyrat family should always be composed.

"Cliff, fly into the air for a bit and find out which way the city is in."

"There's no way I'd be able to do something like that, right?"

"Rudeus would be able to do it."

"Rudeus? Who's that?"

"My teacher."

"Ehh!?"

Eris let out a sigh.

Even if they argued, there'd be no meaning in it.

'What should I do at a time like this?'

Then it came to her; it was something that Ghyslaine had taught her for times when she was lost.

If she remembered correctly, it was to collect tree branches and start a fire.

The smoke would rise to the air, and could be seen from afar.

However, who would see it?

Ruijerd had said that he had things to do today.

Rudeus had said so as well.

Nobody would notice.

"..."

At some point, Eris had unconsciously folded her arms, and in an imposing stance, and the corners of her mouth had curved downwards.^[8]

She then closed her eyes and thought carefully. Ghyslaine had said this.

That at these times when she was anxious that she especially needed to compose herself.

Because of that, no matter the situation, she would never panic.

"Eh, Eris-san. What should we do?"

"There should be other adventurers in this forest."

"I-, I see. If we depend on them... Let's look for them."

Cliff had started running flusteredly.

However, Eris didn't move.

Ruijerd had taught her this.

That in times like this, she should stay still.

That while staying still, she should search for the presence of others.

She had also been taught how to search for them.

Even without a third eye, she could perceive sound, and the surroundings, as well as the flow of mana.

Though Eris was still immature, she did practice everyday.

"Eris-san...?"

"Quiet!"

Eris took a deep breath and then with her eyes still closed, she sharpened her mind.

The sound of the forest.

The sound of leaves rubbing against each other.

The sound of moving animals.

The sound of flying insects.

And then, the faintly audible sound of weapons.

"I've found them. This way."

Immediate decisions and immediate action.

Without hesitation, Eris began to walk.

"What is it? What did you find!?"

"People. They're that way."

"How!?"

"I searched for their presence."

"Did your teacher teach you this too!?"

Having been asked that, Eris thought for a little.

Is Ruijerd a teacher?

He's a teacher, right?

Though it's not as much as Ghyslaine, I've been taught various things by him as well.

He's a teacher.

No, he's someone you could even call a master.

"That's right."

"He's pretty amazing huh, that Rudeus person..."

"Hm? ...Right. Rudeus is amazing."

Without understanding why Rudeus's name was suddenly brought up, Eris continued forward.

Part 6

They had left the forest.

The moment they did, they spotted a horse carriage being turned over.

"Get down!"

"Gueh!"

Eris had immediately gripped Cliff's head and thrown it to the ground.

As for herself, she was crouching and confirming the situation.

"..."

There were 6 people standing there.

One person was a knight in full body armor.

The knight was standing with their back to a tree, and had their sword in a guard.

In the area were men dressed from head to toe in black.

There were 5 of them.

The black clothed men were surrounding the knight.

In the area were three corpses.

All of them were wearing armor.

They were wearing the same armor as the surrounded knight.

The men slowly tightened their encirclement around the knight.

The difference in fighting ability was already clear.

Though this was the case, why wasn't the knight escaping?

The knight had their back to a tree, and looking carefully, a girl could be seen crouching by the base of the tree.

Her expression was brimming with anxiety and despair, and her face was wet with tears.

"Eris-san, that armor means that the knight belongs to the Order of the Temple!"

Cliff informed Eris in a whisper.

Eris's heart was beating fast.

The Order of the Temple.

She had heard of it.

It was one of Milis's three knight orders.

The elite group in charge of defending the country, the Order of the Church.

Spreading Milis's teachings around the world, making known their power, and doing mercenary-like work, the Order of Instruction.

Finally, the branch in charge of heresy inquisitions, their name a synonym for passing judgement onto heretics, the Order of the Temple.

Respectively,

The Order of the Church wore white armor.

The Order of Instruction wore silver armor.

The Order of the Temple wore blue armor.

Though the knight was a long way away, their sky blue armor could be seen.

There was no mistake.

The one who was now cornered was a Knight of the Order of the Temple.

"You bastards! You know who this lady is, don't you!?"

When they raised their voice, it was understood in an instant.

The cornered knight was a woman.

The men looked at each other, and then abruptly broke into laughter.

"That's obvious."

"Then why!?"

"It goes without saying, right?"

"You bastards! Are you with the pope's faction!?"

Eris couldn't understand their conversation.

However, she understood that the black-clothed men seemed to be bad guys, and wanted to kill that girl.

Eris placed her hand to the sword at her waist.

Cliff questioned it.

"W-, what are you planning to do, Eris-san? However you look at this, it's bad. That girl is the shrine maiden said to be one of the candidates for next Pope. In other words, those black-clothed men are definitely an assassination squad employed by the Pope of Milis. They're all skilled. Even if it's us, we don't have a chance of winning..."

Eris hadn't even wondered why Cliff knew so much about this.

All Eris was focusing on was the fact that if Eris couldn't save the girl now, she'd be killed.

Also, Eris was a member of 『Dead End』.

If she abandoned a child, she wouldn't be able to face Ruijerd. Rudeus would always say that as well, and would lend his hand to others.

"Let's just stay unnoticed, and let them do it."

"It's too late. We've already been noticed."

Eris understood.

One of the men had noticed them when she had pushed Cliff down.

She didn't know what the man was thinking.

However, whatever the case, Eris planned to take the initiative.

"You can just keep hiding here, Cliff!"

"E-, Eris-san!"

Eris drew her sword and at the same time leaped towards them.

In an instant, the black-clothed men had spread out.

However...

"You're slow!"

Eris's steps were more nimble than the men had anticipated.

Sword God Style Advanced Rank 『Soundless Longsword』.

As a technique below that of the longsword of light, it was a technique whose swing didn't leave a single sound.

Thanks to Ghyslaine and Ruijerd, Eris's skill in swordsmanship was improving considerably.

The sword entered one of the men from the shoulder, easily bisected his ribs, and perfectly split him in a cut that ran diagonally from the shoulder.

Without being bewildered by the sensation of cutting someone for the first time, Eris turned her sword towards the next opponent.

The men moved to surround Eris.

However, Eris's movements were even quicker.

She had been lectured quite a bit by Ruijerd on what to do when surrounded by multiple opponents.

Many types of monsters like to swarm their enemies.

It was a theory that involved killing them before you were surrounded.

"Haaaa!"

In the blink of an eye, one of the black-clothed men had been cut down.

A tremble ran through the men.

Eris's rhythm was irregular, and after preliminary movements that they couldn't grasp, her slashes came flying.

Because her attacks were difficult to deal with even when the men devoted themselves to evasion, they couldn't do anything else while defending.

However, the men were professionals.

Sacrificing one person, their encirclement was complete.

Two of the black-clothed men leaped in towards Eris at different times.

They were fast.

However, they weren't as fast as Ruijerd.

Their cooperation wasn't to the level of the Pax Coyotes on the Magic Continent either.

They were lukewarm.

"Those guys have daggers soaked in poison! Be careful!"

The knight protecting the girl had shouted that, whilst moving as well.

A slash from outside the encirclement killed one of the men.



When the woman moved, whilst predicting the movements of the men, Eris found an opening in their encirclement.

'I can win.'

Eris had confidence.

Whilst thinking this, she cut down another man.

There were two left.

"Retreat!"

One of the men had yelled this, and in an instant the two had turned around and made to escape.

However, Eris wasn't a naive girl who would relax near the end.

In a flash she had caught up, and slashed into one of their backs.

His upper and lower halves separated, and he fell with his entrails scattering about.

The other man was nowhere to be seen, and had disappeared beyond the plains.

"Hmph!"

Eris snorted.

She sent the blood on her blade flying with a swing.

Eris appeared as she usually did.

However, her heart was beating loudly.

Thinking about it, it was the first time she had fought a human for real, and it

was also the first time she had killed a person.

Moreover, the enemy had daggers coated with poison.

They were weapons that could cause a fatal wound with just one cut.

There wasn't anyone like Rudeus or Ruijerd to protect her back either.

Though she had jumped towards them without a thought, had it not been for that female knight, Eris might have died.

However, Eris didn't reveal any of those thoughts.

She returned her sword to her scabbard, and turned towards the female knight.

"Sorry. One of them escaped."

The knight was a little taken aback by those words.

After all, though she was a girl who hadn't yet reached adulthood, she had passed through a life or death battle and looked excessively calm.

Without taking off her parrot-like helmet, the knight raised a fist to her abdomen and expressed her thanks in the proper manner for a knight of Milis.

"I humbly thank you for your assistance."

"As long as the child is safe, it's fine."

Without returning the courtesy, Eris remembered her own speaking style, and had spoken in a blunt manner.

"I am Therese Latreia of the Order of the Temple. I assume you're an adventurer, but could I ask for your name?"

"I'm E-..."

Eris had thought to give her real name, but stopped.

That's not it.

Rudeus wouldn't have done things like that.

"『Ruijerd of Dead End』. Though I look like this, I'm a Supard."

Hearing 'Supard', Therese's expression had become stern.

Though Eris didn't know it, the Order of the Temple was calling for the expulsion of the Magic Race.

Naturally, Eris didn't exhibit the characteristics of a Supard.

That's why Therese's expression loosened.

Because Eris had not given her real name, but the name of a race that the Order of the Temple was not comfortable with, Therese had judged it to be implying that Eris hadn't wanted to become mixed up in this incident any further.

Though she had saved someone of importance, she didn't desire thanks.

Therese had thought well of this attitude.

"Is that so? I understand..."

Therese had taken a long look at Eris, who was staring intensely with her arms crossed, and committed her face to memory.

After that, she whistled.

When she did, a single horse came running from inside the forest.

The horse which had escaped when the carriage was overturned had returned as practiced.

She placed the girl on the horse, and got on as well.

"If you ever have any trouble, remember the name Therese of the Order of the Knights!"^[9]

Therese had left those words, and rode away on the horse.

Eris silently saw her off.

Like a scene from a fairy-tale, the mounted knight rode away and was seen off by a fearless, red-haired swordsman.

The youth who had been hiding and unable to stand, did nothing except continue to watch them.

Part 7

A certain priest of the Milis religious organization had fallen in love with a hobbit woman.

A child born from the two of them had grown up, and married a woman.

And like that, Cliff was born.

Around the time of Cliff's birth, that priest had been in the midst of a power struggle.

Cliff's parents had been caught up in this and had died.

For the sake of keeping his grandchild Cliff away from the power struggle, he was temporarily left in the care of an orphanage.

The priest then triumphed in the power struggle and became pope, and welcomed in Cliff.

In other words, Cliff Grimoire was the grandchild of the pope.

However, even within the church there were few who knew this.

Because of that, Cliff knew quite well who the attacked girl was.

She was the trump card of the archbishop who was now competing against his grandfather for power, a shrine maiden who possessed wonderous power.

He was even acquainted with her.

Cliff didn't know why she was in such a place.

However, he knew the black-clothed group quite well.

They were the teachers that taught Cliff.

Cliff knew that they were in charge of these kinds of jobs.

And he also knew of their strength.

He had faced them many times in training, but hadn't won even once.

Those teachers hadn't been a problem for Eris.

In reality, she had just barely won, but what was reflected in Cliff's eyes were foes that he couldn't defeat even with all his might being overwhelmed by her.

Before he had noticed, Cliff had been looking at Eris with eyes of yearning.

The girl was walking towards town with a tired expression.

'This person will definitely become someone amazing.'

When he thought this, words spilled from his lips.

"Eris-san, please marry me!"

"Eh, absolutely not!"

Immediately making displeased expression, Eris rejected him.

Cliff had thought that it was impossible that a proposal from his talented self could be rejected.

'Why?' he wondered.

He considered the conversation he had with her today.

Right, there was the person she had called her teacher.

She had mentioned her teacher again and again.

If he remembered correctly, the name was Ru... Ru...

"Rudeus."

When he recalled the name and he had tried saying it, Eris had turned to face him.

"What kind of person is the Rudeus that you mentioned?"

A few minutes later, Cliff had begun to absolutely hate himself for having asked that question.

He had thought that Eris was a taciturn girl, but that wasn't the case.

When telling stories about Rudeus, as though there were no one better, she continued to boast.

From the plains to the Adventurers Guild, she continued to talk.

Moreover, the expression she made was undeniably that of a maiden in love, and the contents of her talk were nothing but excessive praise.

Cliff had been made more than jealous enough.

"...It's about time I head home."

While aware that he was making a discouraged expression, he had said that to Eris.

Though it seemed as though Eris felt that she hadn't talked nearly enough, when Cliff said he was going home she simply waved her hand without concern for him.

"Bye then."

That curt attitude seemed like a completely different person from the one who had been passionately talking just a little earlier.

Until he could no longer see her figure, Cliff wordlessly saw her off.

The man named Rudeus who had softened the strong, beautiful and perfect Eris to this extent...

Thoughts of the as of yet unseen Rudeus had come to Cliff's mind as he returned home to the church.

After that, he was scolded by those who had been looking for him.

Because of the incident this time, the power struggles within the religious organization intensified, and because the Pope had considered that Milishion was too dangerous for Cliff, he sent his grandchild to another country but... that was something completely unrelated to Eris.

By the way, speaking of Eris...

When she had returned to the inn, the instant she saw the depressed Rudeus, the memories of this time's events were pushed into the recesses of her mind and she ended up completely forgetting.

However, that's another story.

Notes

1. Actually it says 'Milis Religious Organization', but for brevity it is translated as Church.
2. Arrogant Water Dragon

3. He just calls her an insult that flat-out means "really ugly girl".
4. In Japanese, the phrase X's Egg, is used as an expression to mean 'an X in the making'. Because of this, those two (crappy) jokes didn't come out very well.
5. Read as 'exodus flame'. Means 'imprisoning blaze fire bullet'.
6. Think '(Orang)Utans'.
7. It means something more like 'amazed that she had done something so retarded'.
8. Literally: curved into the ^ character.
9. The verb is cut off from this sentence. All it says is "When you're troubled, [omitted verb] the name of Therese of the Order of the Temple." Could be saying to use her name to get out of trouble. Could be asking to come find her. Could be anything.

Chapter 50 - To the Central Continent

Part 1

Two months had passed.

We'd arrived at the port city West Port.

The townscape was the spitting image of Saint Port. However, the scale of the city was larger.

That's natural.

The journey from the capital of the Holy Kingdom Milis to the capital of the Kingdom of Asura was this world's Silk Road.

Every town could become a center for commerce.

West Port is one of these. Though the scale isn't as great as the Business District in Milishion, many businesses have their headquarters here, and the merchants associated with these businesses are crowded together here.

Even from the outside of the town, you can see large warehouses lined up by the harbour.

In the storehouse area are people who might be slaves or apprentices, busily working.

They've placed large fish on carts and are transporting them.

Robed figures are using water magic to freeze them.

Like that, the fish make their way to the warehouse.

After that, the fish are probably left in ice, or salted.

Perhaps they might even be smoked before being sent to various places.

Part 2

Now then.

This is as far as the horse carriage goes.

The ferries of this world are different to those from my old life, and they can't transport carriages.

Thus, we'll sell it the same way we sold the lizard, and once we cross the ocean we'll buy a new one.

I sell it to a horse merchant.

Unlike the time with the lizard, this isn't particularly moving, so I'll give it a name.

Goodbye, Haru Orara^[1].

After that, we headed towards the checking station.

Unlike the one in Saint Port, it's a large building.

There are armored guards standing by the entrance.

I've seen a lot of armored Milishion knights all over the city.

Looking at Ruijerd and Eris, I wonder if the armor they're wearing is enough to defend them, and I become anxious.

The offensive ability of the creatures in this world is high.

It's likely that taking just one hit is enough to destroy your armour and leave you in your underwear.^[2]

If you receive an attack, and are sent flying into a hole from the recoil, it'll be 'The End' for you.

Leaving the jokes aside, when we try entering, we find that the people inside are in a commotion.

Those who look like adventurers, those who look like merchants, they're all making energetic expressions and briskly interacting with the staff.

It's completely different to Wind Port where the station was deserted, and the staff had no enthusiasm at all.

For now, I face one of the counters and talk to one of the attendants.

The receptionist here is also large breasted.

I wonder if there's an unwritten law in this world that states that receptionists must be large breasted.

It's possible.

Though I had been thinking about this, I hadn't let it show.

"Excuse me, I'd like to apply for a voyage."

"I understand. In that case, please hold onto this and wait for a moment."

With that, she hands me a wooden ticket.

The number 34 is written on it.

This gives off a truly bureaucratic feeling.

I return to the waiting area and take a seat.

Eris had immediately sat down next to me.

Ruijerd is still standing.

When I take a look at our surroundings, I find that a lot of people are waiting like we are.

"It seems like it'll take a little while."

"Are we not going to hand over the letter?"

At Ruijerd's question, I had shaken my head.

"We'll do that after our number is called."

"So that's how you do things, huh...?"

Eris is fidgeting for some reason.

Eris isn't used to waiting for things.

I guess it can't be helped.

"Rudeus. We're sort of being watched..."

At her words, I look for what she had been gazing at.

What she had been looking at was a guard.

The guards had been sneaking glances at Eris.

Eris who had been on the receiving end of these gazes was now making an angry expression and returning their gaze with a glare.

"You musn't get into a fight."

"I wasn't going to."

I have trouble believing that.

But, let's ignore that.

Now then, for what reason are the guards looking at Eris, I wonder.

I really don't have a clue.

Could it be that their eyes have been stolen away by her beauty?

Lately, Eris has become quite beautiful.

However, she's still classed as a child.

There's no way that every single one of these knights is a lolicon.

"Number 34, please come forward."

Because we were called, we head to the counter.

We hand over the letter to the receptionist, and let her know that we'd like to travel on a voyage.

She had received the letter with a smile, and then the moment she saw the name on the back, she made a puzzled expression.

"Please wait a moment."

After saying that, she had left her seat and disappeared further into the office.

After a while, a loud sound rang out from further inside the office.

At the same time, someone's angry voice could be heard.

A guard then ran out from further inside the office, and whispered something to another guard.

With a severe expression, the guard who had been whispered to now ran outside.

For some reason or other the atmosphere had become dangerous.

Though I had handed over the letter that Ruijerd trusted, it might really have been better had I investigated this Gouache Brush person.

The receptionist from a little while ago had returned.

She wasn't hiding her nervous expression.

"I'm sorry for keeping you waiting. It seems that Duke Baqciel wants to meet you."

I had nothing but a bad feeling about this.

Part 3

"Chief of the Milis Continent Customs House, Duke Baqciel von Wieser."

That pig looks just like a pig.

Ah, my mistake.

That man looks just like a pig.

The area around his neck is covered in fat, and his chin is completely buried in it.

Light blonde hair clings to his skin.

There are shadows under his eyes, and he gives off the impression of a tanuki.

He looks both like a pig, and a tanuki, and he isn't hiding his displeasure.

In the past, I've seen a man like this somewhere before.

It was in the mirror.

"Hmph. For a filthy demon to bring me such a letter is..."

Baqciel is sitting in an extravagant leather chair.

Without standing, he strikes the sheet of paper in his hand.

While the chair squeaks, he glares over at us.

A tool for opening wax seals can be seen sitting on a high class work desk, amongst a lot of documents.

In other words, the paper is probably the letter we handed over.

"This letter has quite the name^[3]. The seal looks quite similar to the real thing as

well. However, I won't be fooled. This is a forgery."

Baqciel had thrown the letter away. I reflectively catch it.

Though this person is a Supard, they are someone I owe a great debt to.

Though they are of few words, they possess an admirable spirit.

You shall waive their voyage fee, and courteously send them to the Central Continent.

Galgard Nash Venick

Grand Master, Order of Instruction

When I saw those words I nearly collapsed of dizziness.

Just where did he get the name Gouache Brush?

GAlgard naSH venick

GASH

Ah, so that's how he got Gouache?

If he's a good natured person, it's possible that he said something like 'Just call me Gash'.

If so, then Ruijerd might have taken this at face value, and was under the impression that it was his real name.

But then where did he get Brush from?

Moreover, that job position...

Grand Master of the Order of Instruction.

The Grand Master of one of Milis's three knight orders.

I'm starting to get a headache.

Why would someone like that be Ruijerd's acquaintance?

No, I can imagine how things are.

For instance... right, his position.

Becoming the Grand Master of the Order of Instruction meant that he was someone high up.

If it were made public that he was on good terms with a Supard, things would become bad.

That's why he used an alias, for example.

There's a simpler explanation as well.

Ruijerd had met him 40 years earlier, and in that time he had changed his name due to marriage or something, for example.

"To start with, that taciturn man would never do something like write a letter. I know that man quite well. It might be because he hates it, but he's a man who'll never write except for necessary documents and the like. For him to write a letter for a demon like you? Even jokes have their limits."

Speaking of Ruijerd, he's making a difficult expression.

The letter he had brought was judged to be a fake.

Considering his perspective, he might be thinking that it's because he's a Supard.

Actually, according to Paul, this Baqciel man is famous for hating the Demon Race.

That might not be completely wrong.

However, if Baqciel is famous for this, then regardless of if he's Gash or Galgard, he should know what kind of man Baqciel is.

In that case, it would be better for the contents of the letter to be a bit more persuasive.

There's also the possibility that the letter is a fake though...

No.

I recall Ruijerd's words.

Gash lives in a large building.

It's a building whose size is in the same league as Kishirisu Castle.

You can say that for a private residence, it's quite a large building.

However, if that were actually the headquarters of a knight order or something, then...

The building would be big, and there would probably be a lot of knights inside.

If that were the case, I would agree with Ruijerd's "He did have a lot of subordinates" comment.

Be that as it may, even if I did understand the situation, there'd be no meaning to it.

Baqciel has already concluded that the letter is a fake.

And having come this far, there's no way we can just say 'it was a forgery, I'm sorry and goodbye'.

I take a step forward.

"In other words, your Excellency is saying that this letter is a forgery?"

"Why are you^[4]... Children should stay out of it."

Duke Baqciel had made a suspicious expression.

It feels like it's been a while since I've been treated like a child.

It's a fresh feeling.

I'm not treated like a child when I want to be treated like a child, and I'm treated like a child when I want to be treated as an adult.

It's outside of my control.

While thinking about this, for now I raise my right hand to my chest and give a greeting in the manner of a noble.

"Please excuse the lateness of my introduction. I am Rudeus Greyrat."

When I said this, Baqciel's eyebrow twitched.

"Greyrat... you say?"

"Yes. Though it is shameful, I am one of the lowest ranking members of the high ranked Asura noble family, Greyrat."

"Hm... But the Greyrats attach the name of an ancient wind god to theirs."

"Truly. I'm from a branch family, so giving such a name is something that isn't permitted."

Branch family.

When Baqciel hears this, he starts to look down on me.

In that instant, I point out Eris with an open hand.

"However, Eris-ojousama is a genuine holder of the Boreas Greyrat name."

Having tapped her on the back, Eris took a step forward.

She's looking at me with a surprised expression, but isn't perturbed beyond this level.

Her arms are folded, and her legs are shoulder width apart.

However, as if thinking 'No, no, not like this', she holds her chest out, and moves to perform a curtsy in the manner of a lady, but realising that she isn't wearing a skirt, she holds her hand to her chest and greets in the same way as I do.

"I'm the daughter of Philip Boreas Greyrat, Eris Boreas Greyrat."

On top of being kind of stiff, I get the feeling that what she did was a little wrong.

I try and determine Baqciel's expression.

It's a little hard to understand.

Well whatever.

I'll just rely on the influence of Eris' family from here.

"Hm, why is the daughter of an Asura noble in such a place?"

It's a natural question.

There's no need for lies here.

"Is your Excellency aware of the Mana calamity that befell the Fedoa region 2

years ago?"

"I am aware. It seems a large number of people were teleported."

"Yes. We were wrapped up in it as well."

After that, because I needed to protect Eris, we had Ruijerd act as a guard and travel across the Demon Continent.

At the customs house for heading towards the Milis Continent, we managed somehow by selling off our belongings, but we don't have enough money for the trip from the Milis Continent to the Central Continent.

In particular, Ruijerd's voyage fee is too high.

Thus, as an acquaintance of the Greyrat family, as well as a friend of Ruijerd, we had asked Lord Galgard for help.

Lord Galgard gladly wrote a letter for us.

I spun a story like that.

"Ojousama is dressed in the manner of an adventurer, but that is for the purpose of concealing the fact that she is a high class noble, and avoiding the attention of unsavory individuals. Your Excellency must understand this as well."

"I see."

Baqciel still has a sour expression on.

"In other words, you lot are the allies of the slave thief group named 『Fedoa Region Search Group』."

"Y-... You're mistaken. What are you saying?"

"I don't know the name Eris Boreas Greyrat."

Snorting like a pig, Baqciel continues with a "however".

"I do know the name of a small-time scoundrel called Paul Greyrat. It's rumored that he's one of the recent slave abductors, you see."

Your bad reputation is merciless, Papa.

"In other words, you're saying the following: Galgard-sama's letter is a forgery and Eris-sama isn't an Asura noble. Furthermore, We are the allies of that undisciplined towards women, smelly footed, alcoholic, hopeless case who not only finds fault about everything his son does, but also puts his daughter through hardships. Correct?"

"Mmn."

What a cruel guy.

Paul has been giving his all in his own way.

He certainly has a lot of bad points, and he may have gone about things wrong.

However, it's absolutely unacceptable to call him a hopeless case and give up on him.

"Why do you think the seal on the letter is a forgery?"

Saying this, I point towards the paper on top of the desk.

Baqciel frowns ever so slightly, and then nods.

"There's a large supply of forgeries for the seal the Order of Instruction uses."

Is that how it is?

It's the first time I've heard this, huh.

"Why do you believe that my employer, Eris-ojousama, is a fake?"

"As if a daughter of Asura nobility could bear with looking like such a bumpkin swordswoman."

When I look at Eris, I find that she's folded her arms and is in her usual pose.

Although there are no marks on her chest, she's suntanned enough that you can't imagine that she's a refined lady, and her muscles look even firmer than that of your average young adventurer.

"I see. It seems that your Excellency does not know of Sauros-sama."

I laugh without warning.

Baqciel immediately takes the bait.

"Sauros... was it? The feudal lord of the Fedoa region?"

"As well as Eris-sama's grandfather. He had Eris-sama undertake special education for swordsmen."

"Why would he do such a thing...?"

"Though this is a private matter... It has been decided that Eris will marry into the Notus family. Sauros-sama hates the present head of the Notus family so..."

"I see."

In summary, that Eris was raised to be such a boorish person for the sake of beating the head of the Notus family to death in the bedroom was what I had implied.

Eris is tilting her head in confusion.

If she understood, she would probably cave in my face.

"Thus, it is essential that Ojousama returns to Asura. Should you conclude that Ojousama is a fake, then we will return to Milishion and appeal this decision at the appropriate place."

I don't know where this 'Appropriate' place is.

I haven't looked this up, after all.

"Hmph, if you are the real thing as you say, then show me some proof."

"Galgard-sama's letter is better proof than anything."

"Foolishness. This is a pointless argument."

"That's fine even so. Could you be looking to start a confrontation with the Greyrats of Asura?"

Crap.

I have no idea what I'm saying or anything.

However, for now it seems like I'm getting through to him.

Baqciel is glaring at me.

"Very well. In that case, I shall grant you and that Ojousama passage."

"However, our guard-"

"With my name, Duke Baqciel, I'll appoint you several knights as guards. Rather than relying on a demon, this way would be safer, correct?"

I see.

In other words, if it's about passing a demon through, then he'll appoint two

available knights instead.

Anyhow, it seems that Baqciel has no intention of allowing Ruijerd passage.

For him to be obstinate to this extent...

Though it's the first time seeing it personally, the prejudice towards the Demon Race is stronger than I had thought.

Now then, what do I do about this?

Should we transport just Ruijerd separately?

Would we end up in another fight with smugglers because of that?

It's possible.

What to do...?

-knock knock-

At that moment, a knock suddenly resounded through the room.

"What? I'm in the middle of something, you know?"

Though Baqciel was making a puzzled face but had opened the door without waiting for a reply.

There, dressed in a blue coloured armour, stood a blonde haired woman.

"Excuse me. I had heard that 『Ruijerd of Dead End』 was here, but..."

"...Kaa-sama?"

It was Zenith.

Part 4

Because I had muttered the word 'kaa-sama', everyone there had turned their gazes towards the woman.

She glared at me indignantly.

"I'm single. I don't have a child as big as you."

Wait, Zenith-san?

Have you lost your memories in the time that I haven't seen you?

Or could it be that you've fallen out of love with Paul?

While thinking this, I stare at her.

When I do so, it becomes clear that there are a few places where she looks a little different.

Because we've been apart for a number of years, I don't remember Zenith's face that well, but the position of her mole is different, and her hair is a little different as well.

It's someone else.

"Forgive me. You resemble my missing mother."

"...I see."

She looked at me with pity.

I may have been seen as a child who had been separated by his mother.

Though I haven't really been treated as a child recently, my appearance is still that of a child after all.

"Well, well... If it isn't Temple Knight-dono, who has recently been demoted. Is there something you need?"

Baqciel snorts, and glares at the knight who resembles Zenith.

"A Supard has appeared inside the borders of Milis. I'm devoted to my work, so it's natural that I've come here, isn't it?"

"Your new post begins 10 days from now. Don't stick your nose in."

"Don't stick my nose in? That's a strange thing to say, Duke. Certainly, I have not yet taken up my position officially. However, the one who formerly held the post has already departed, and is no longer in Milishion. When there is a problem at the customs house, it is a Temple Knight who proceeds with the matter. Though this is the case, there is no other Temple Knight to be found here besides myself. Just what is going on?"

The knight who resembles Zenith continued to talk on and on.

Baqciel had uttered "Uh-" and his complexion began to worsen.

"There should be two guards at the customs house. That is something decided by the Milis Religious Organization; an ironclad rule. Surely, Duke Baqciel, you aren't planning on rebelling against the Milis Church?"

"How could that be? I have no such intention. It's just that you've come to this town in no time at all. How about taking a break first?"

"That won't be necessary."

Duke Pig's expression was like that of livestock about to be slaughtered.

It seems like I'll be having a good time the next time I eat pork.

"So what's going on here?"

It seems that somehow or other, this knight is as important as the Duke.

Hearing 'Duke', you'd normally think of the highest class of noble, but...

Religion is very strong in Milis, so that might be a reason.

"What's happened is..."

With that, Baqciel begins to explain.

Sometimes Baqciel will say something colored in prejudice, and as appropriate, I provide supplementary explanations.

The female knight quietly listens to the end, and looks towards us.

"Hm... He certainly is a demon, huh...?"

She turns a particularly strong look towards Ruijerd.

However, the moment she sees Eris, that gaze relaxes.

Then, finally, our eyes meet, and she suddenly brings her hand to my chin in thought.

"...Earlier you mistook me for your mother, didn't you? Would it be fine if you told me her name?"

"It's Zenith. Zenith Greyrat."

"And your father's name?"

I glance at Baqciel.

Right.

I don't really wanna say it...

"It's Paul Greyrat."

For the time being, I say it frankly.

Baqciel's eyes open.

My father is a different person to that trash we mentioned earlier.

That's what I'll tell him.

My father is a saintly person.

He'll even give you money if you hit him just a little.

"I see."

The female knight had said this, and then crouched down and embraced me tightly.

"...Eh!"

I was shocked.

I suddenly got hugged out of nowhere.

"It must have been hard on you..."

While saying this, she started patting my head.

Because she's wearing armor, this doesn't feel very good.

However, she gives off the sweet and soft scent of a woman.

Naturally my lower parts... don't rise.

That's strange.

Why, oh son of mine?

What's happened?

It's the smell of slightly sweaty women that you love so much.

Just recently, even that time with Eris...

Which reminds me.

I look at Eris, find that her eyes are wide open and she's clenching her fists.

Scary.

"Umm... errm?"

After patting my head, the female knight had risen to a stand.

Without looking towards me, she then declared,

"I'll be taking custody of them."

"What!? One is a demon, you know!"

Baqciel is confused.

The female knight snatches the letter from my hand, and quickly looks over it.

"There's no problem with the letter, either. This is Lord Galgard's handwriting."

"It can't be. Is a Temple Knight going against Milis' teachings...?"

At that point, with an "Ah-", Eris raised her voice.

The female knight turns to face Eris and winks.

What?

"I, the Middle Leader^[5] of the Order of the Temple's 『Shield Group』 have spoken."

"Ku-, even though you had lost your subordinates, and were then demoted..."

"Hmph. I'll send those words right back at you. However, between I who had completed my duty, and you who had given up halfway, there's quite a difference in our positions."

Baqciel gnashed his teeth at that.

Somehow, it seems that he's also been demoted.

Considering this, despite being called 'Duke', the position seems quite a bit less important.

It's strange.

Bacqiel's eyes are full of hatred.

"You... No matter how high of birth you may be, if you get too carried away..."

Baqciel never finished his complaint.

The female knight had quickly lowered her head.

"No, I apologize. I've said too much. I have no intention of quarreling further with you. This case is a personal matter. Please forgive me."

I had been thinking that she had great timing.

Saying as much as she wanted, and then immediately apologizing.

With those few words, she had dispelled Baqciel's anger as well.

I'll try and copy her the next time I anger someone.

"A personal matter, you say?"

"Mmn."

The knight nodded firmly in the face of Baqciel's puzzled expression.

Then, with a slap she then places her hand on my shoulder.

"This child is my nephew."

What was that!?

Part 5

Therese Latreia.

She's the fourth-born daughter of the Milishion noble family, Latreia, and having become a Middle Leader of the Order of the Temple at a young age, she's an up-and-coming knight.

Her family is the Latreia family that holds an Earldom.

Zenith's family is the Latreia family that holds an Earldom.

When it was revealed that I was her kin, Baqciel looked like he had given up on something, and after letting out a large sigh, waived the voyage fees for us.

Part 6

Right now I'm in a West Port Inn, and am currently being hugged.

The ones in the room are Therese, Eris and I.

It might be because Ruijerd had read the mood, but he's not here.

"Rudeus-kun. I know about you from Nee-sama's letters."

"Is that so? What did mother^[6] write?"

"That you were extremely cute. And though I'd never imagined that I'd see the real thing, you truly are extremely cute."

While saying this, Therese is burying her face into the nape of my neck.

Thinking about it, in the 12 years I've been alive, though I've been called brazen, suspicious looking, or disgusting, the only one who's ever thought of me as cute is Zenith.



However, though I'm being embraced by a large-breasted beauty, for some reason the railgun between my legs isn't firing off any coins with its super electromagnetism.^[7]

Speaking of which, my VICTORY never did STAND UP when it was Zenith.^[8]

Thinking about it, I never did think to become any closer to Norn than

necessary.

...I wonder if it's because we're related.

"Therese. It's about time you let go of Rudeus."

Resting her chin in her hand, Eris taps at Therese.

She's in a bad mood.

She might be jealous.

I'm a sinful man.

"Eris-sama. Though I understand your feelings, I don't know when I'll be able to see Rudeus-kun again. Moreover, the next time we meet, he'll have definitely lost his cuteness. It's a fleeting moment. Please pardon this."

Without any shame, Therese continues to stroke my body.

"Therese-san, why are you speaking to Eris so respectfully?"

"I owe her my life, after all."

I decide to investigate further.

Eris had gone out to suppress goblins, and saved Therese when she was driven into a corner by enemy forces.

At the time, Therese had been protecting a certain VIP and had it not been for Eris, that VIP would have lost their life as well.

The story was something like that.

I hadn't heard a word of this.

When I had looked towards Eris, I found that she was making an awkward expression.

"Sorry, Rudeus. I had forgotten about it..."

According to Eris, she had seen me all depressed and forgotten all about about the goblin hunting incident.

It's my fault, huh?

Guess it couldn't be helped.

There she is (I'm being hugged from behind so I'm not sure, but) probably making an expression of ecstasy and groping my body.

I won't go so far as to say it feels disgusting, but somehow I feel kind of uncomfortable.

At any rate, even having my body touched, with boobs pressed against my back, I'm not getting aroused.

It's a new sensation.

"Ahh, but Rudeus-kun really is cute. Cute enough that I'd eat him up."

"Do you mean eating me up in a sexual sense?"

I had tried to drop an appropriate joke in, but my mouth was covered up by her hand.

"...You're cuter when you don't talk, huh? When you do, I recall that Paul guy's face."

It appears that Therese doesn't like Paul very much.

"Still, Grand Master Gash is the same as ever, huh?"

While she continued to stroke me, Therese changed the subject.

"You'd think that it'd be obvious that that kind of thing would happen if you handed over such a letter to Baqciel."

According to Therese...

Galgard Nash Venick is the Grand Master of the Order of Instruction.

The Order of Instruction is a mercenary group that sends young knights to areas of strife for combat experience, and at the same time is responsible for spreading the teachings of Milis to various places.

Right now they're in a recruitment phase that occurs between expeditions, and have returned to Milis for the sake of recruiting new members.

"Gouache" is that Grand Master.

In the past he had returned as a survivor of the Demon Continent expedition, and over the past few decades he's been the driving force behind the Order of Instruction being successively known as the the strongest.

An unrefined and taciturn man, he rarely laughs.

It's rumored that no matter what kind of villain they are, he's able to deal with them impartially.

Participating in one of the Order of Instruction's expeditions is a coming of age ceremony for all Milishion knights.

Since the time Gash had become Grand Master, the survival of the Order of Instruction rose past 90%.

As a result, the Order of Instruction is presently well known as the 'strongest'.

There are a number of people who have had their lives saved by Gash, and currently there is no knight who doesn't hold him in respect.

"And he's also famous for hating writing and being of few words."

Though he promptly gives out orders on the battlefield, normally he's quite unmotivated and for example won't return greetings.

He hardly writes any letters, and completes most documents with a stamp.

There are hardly any people who have seen his handwriting.

According to Ruijerd's story, he was talkative and passionate.

However, Ruijerd isn't very talkative either, after all.

Perhaps our standards are just different.

There's also the possibility that he's just different with Ruijerd.

"Hey. Just how long are you planning to cling to him like that...?"

Eris was steadily becoming more irritated, and it felt like she was about 5 seconds away from being angry for real, so I separated from Therese.

"Ah... Rudeus-kun's warmth is..."

Though Therese is making a regretful expression, I'm not a hug-pillow^[9]. I wasn't even enjoying it, after all.

"Rudeus, come here."

Being told that, I sit down next to her.

When I do, my hand is firmly grasped.

"..."

When I look at Eris's face, I find that her ears are bright red.

Just by gazing at that profile, my mouth becomes a little slack.

Looking at Therese, I find that she had been hitting a pillow.

She could have just hit a wall.

She seems to lack muscle, though.

Therese let out a sigh and made a serious expression.

"That's right, Rudeus-kun. Let me give you just one piece of advice. It might not have much meaning since you're about to leave Milis but..."

Having introduced the topic, Therese continued.

"It'd be better not to mention the Supard race while you're in the country."

"Why?"

"One of the old teachings of the Milis Church dictates that the Demon Race should be completely expelled."

The Demon Race should be completely driven out of the Milis Continent.

That's one of Milis's teachings.

Though it's hardly practiced anymore, it's something that the Order of the Temple obediently adhere to.

It seems that for a Demon Race as famous as the Supard race, even if they were a fake, the knights would still drive them out with all their power.

"Because he had helped Rudeus-kun, even I can't help but overlook him. However, normally it absolutely wouldn't be overlooked."

"It's pointless."

Replying to the serious Therese was Eris with a cold look.

"If it's you guys, no matter how many people you bring, you won't be able to win against Ruijerd."

"That's true. It's as Eris-sama says."

Therese had spoken in a tone that implied that was natural, and made a bitter smile.

"However, the Order of the Temple is a gathering of religious zealots, myself included. That's why even if we understand that there's no chance of winning, we have no choice but to fight."

Among the knights of Milis, there are people like that too.

That's why, if we ever came back to the Milis continent, we had to be careful.

This was something that Therese made sure we understood.

This incident made me realize again just how deep-rooted the discrimination against the Demon Race was.

Restoring the honor of the Supard on our travels from now on may be difficult.

Also, it's possible that if it comes to light that I worship Roxy as a God, I might be caught by the heresy inquisition and be made to go through some horrible experiences.

That's why I decide to keep silent on my religious affiliation.

Part 7

The voyage turned out well.

Therese had taken care of all the necessary arrangements, from the food on route, to medicine for seasickness.

I had thought that the pharmacology in this world wasn't very developed, but it seems that this world doesn't get by solely on healing magic.

They at least have something of the level of seasickness medicine.

However, I heard that it was quite expensive.

The things called 'Family Connections' are wonderful.

Therese had made things as comfortable as possible for Eris.

She had looked at Ruijerd with stern eyes but... that can't be helped.

Not everything has an easy solution to it.

Thanks to the seasickness medicine, though Eris looked a little uncomfortable, she was well enough that she hadn't asked me to use Healing.

Speaking of my true thoughts, I felt it was a shame that I couldn't see a meek Eris.

However, thanks to that, my gauge didn't fill up, my Buster Wolf didn't run wild, and I didn't receive Eris' Sunny Punch.^[10]

It was as usual.

However, it might have been because Eris was uneasy about last time, but while we were on the boat, Eris was always attached to me.

She wasn't meek.

However, seeing that Eris was able to become excited about seeing the sea, I was satisfied as well.

"Yo, you two. Getting pretty steamy over there! Are you getting married in the Dragon King Kingdom?"

When the two of us were watching the sea, the sailors started whistling and poking fun at us.

"Yeah. It's going to be quite a grand one."

Because of that I got carried away and wrapped my arm around Eris' shoulder, and was hit.

"I-, it's still too early for marriage!"

Though Eris was hitting me, at the same time she didn't seem annoyed and was a little bashful.

It seems she hates being made fun of.

She'd prefer to do that kind of thing in a place with just the two of us, and where the mood was right.

Even Eris the sword-wielding Ashura was a maiden when it came to matters of love.

Still, marriage huh?

Philip and the others had tried to pair Eris and I together.

I wonder what's happened to them?

Paul had told me not to be optimistic but...

It's not just them.

Zenith and Lilia are still missing.

We don't even know where Aisha is.

There's no news of Sylphy either.

I don't know if Ghyslaine is alive, either.

It's nothing but worries.

No, it'd be best to not think in such a bad direction.

There's the possibility that unexpectedly, we might find upon returning to the Fedoa region that everyone has returned safely.

It's an optimistic thought.

I know that there's absolutely no way this is the case.

However, for now at least, I won't think about these worries.

That's what I've decided.

Just like that, we left the Milis Continent.

Notes

1. Haru Urara (ハルウララ) is the name of a Japanese racehorse. The horse gained nationwide popularity in 2003, not due to her success, but rather, due to a long string of consecutive losses. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haru_Urara
2. A reference to the video game Ghosts 'n Goblins where if the player is hurt, this exact thing happens. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghosts_and_Goblins

3. As in, the letter produced the name of quite the person.
4. Uses 'kisama' (rude form of "you" in Japanese).
5. Kanji reads 'company commander'.
6. No honorific, standard way of mentioning own mother in the face of outsiders. Hence leaving as standard 'mother'.
7. A reference to Misaka Mikoto of To Aru Kagaku no Railgun.
8. This is a reference to Stand up to the Victory, one of V Gundam's opening songs.
9. Dakimakura.
10. A Fatal Fury/KOF reference. Terry Bogard has a famous move called Buster Wolf, as well as one called Sunny Punch.

Side Story - Return of Roxy

Part 1

Roxy Migurdia returned to her hometown.

The circumstances of the village hadn't changed at all.

Her acquaintances in the village as well as the members had almost not changed at all.

The number of inhabitants had increased, but the way it was eerily quiet was just the same as in the old days.

Formerly she would never have thought it was eerie, but after traveling all around the world if you were to ask Roxy, this village is abnormal.

Just silently, even though there's no one speaking any words, the people of the village are just living while understanding their purpose.

Once they saw Roxy they just kept staring at her.

Roxy knew it.

They were using the Migurd races special ability, telepathy, to try and talk to her.

However, Roxy can't hear it.

She could hear something like a little bit of noise, but just that.

Roxy could not respond to their words.

After a little while, the figures of her parents appeared.

The first time seeing her parents in a while and again they had not changed at all.

They were delighted to see Roxy who had returned and welcomed her.

What she had been doing until now, or where she had gone by herself, they asked her with worried voices.

Elinalize and Talhand were waiting outside of the village.

It seems they thought something of one's return home.

Roxy told of her journey until now in an indifferent voice.

Her parents, while listening to her story, were surprised and made relieved faces.

They said for her to do as she likes.

However, Roxy felt alienated.

The words of worry and the words of welcome, to them they were a foreign language.

The truly important words for them, they would never speak with their mouth.

Especially, whispering words of love.

It could be the case that they are truly worried from the bottom of their hearts.

However, that was not transmitted to Roxy.

For I who cannot use the Migurd races ability, they are things that are not transmitted to me.

Roxy feels lonely about that matter.

If I were to stay here any longer than this it would just be painful.

It would just be confirming that I'm nothing but a failure in regards to the Migurd race.

After thinking that Roxy decided not to stay long and to quickly depart.

She quickly made preparations for the journey.

"You're already going to leave?"

"Yes."

"At least stay for one night."

"No, we're in a hurry on this journey, I was just stopping by for a bit."

Roxy shook her head with an expressionless face to her father who was making a worried expression.

"When is the next time you'll return?"

"I don't know. I might never return again."

Roxy said it honestly.

Then her mother standing next to her father made a worried expression as well.

"Roxy? Come back at least once every 20 years."

"Okay, I guess?"

She responded with a half-hearted answer.

"I may return within 50 years."

"Really? It's a promise."

"Yes."

Roxy vaguely nodded and her mother started crying.

"Ah, mother...?"

"Oh my, sorry. Even though I decided not to cry, I'm sorry..."

Tears.

After seeing that, something inside of Roxy started to move.

Unbeknownst to her, she was being hugged by her mother.

Then, her father embraced both Roxy and her mother at the same time.

That time, Roxy finally understood it.

That it's not something only said in words.

In the end, she stayed in the village for about three days.

For the first time in a while she spent those days taking it easy.

Part 2

"The Owner of Dead End".

Its true identity was Rudeus Grayrat.

In order for Roxy to accept that fact required a number of hours.

After entering the Magic Continent, and moving north and further north while seeking information about Rudeus.

The further north they got, the more they heard the name Rudeus.

They were approaching it.

About the same time they thought that, they realized something strange was going on.

"Fake Dead End" information and Rudeus sighting information were awfully mixed together.

The young human race boy who can use voiceless incantations and "The Owner" of the fake Dead End.

It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say they are already the same person, on the way Talhand said it a number of times.

No, it was something she realized from the start.

She just didn't want to admit that they passed right by each other without realizing it.

However, after making it to this Town of Rikarisu, she had no choice other than to accept it.

The "Dead End" incident that happened two years prior.

The testimony from one who used to be her old party member, Nokopara.

And then the testimony from her parents in her hometown.

After compiling all of those, Roxy finally accepted it.

That "The Owner of Dead End" is Rudeus Greyrat.

Part 3

"I see... Bureizu died did he..."^[1]

"Ah, it seems that a Red-Fang Cobra swallowed him whole."

It's been several years since I left Magic Continent.

There should be a number of things piled up to talk about, but all we talked about were things of the old days.

Roxy closed her eyes and remembered things about Bureizu.

With a face like a pig, and a bad mouth, the moment Roxy made any sort of mistake he would start with the abusive language.

However, he wasn't a bad guy.

He was a reliable man in terms of warriors.

It seems that until he died he managed to make it together with a veteran party of B rank members.

He was the leader of a B rank party on the Magic Continent.

That sarcastic guy became a fine person.

However, the party name was Super Bureizu.

It seems that his naming sense hadn't changed from the past.

It seems that the opponent who wiped out that veteran party, was effortlessly defeated by Rudeus and the party he just formed a short while prior.

Soon after he started his adventure he subjugated an A rank monster.

It was something the old Roxy would never have been able to outdo.

However, that as well is just like Rudeus, thus Roxy laughed weakly.

"Roxy has changed quite a bit."

Nokopara said that while slowly drinking the specialty strong impact alcohol of the Magic Continent.

Roxy looked at the cup in her hand.

She looked at her own face reflected on the surface, and wondered if that was the case.

"I don't really get it myself though..."

"No, I mean you've become quite adult-like."

"What is that supposed to mean, are you treating me like a fool?"

During the time with Nokopara and the others were adventuring, Roxy had already reached the adult form of the Migurd race.

After that, there have been almost no changes to her figure.

I haven't changed at all, is what Roxy was self-conscious about.

"I'm not taking you for a fool. How do I put it, the atmosphere. The old you used to be more childish."

"Even though my outer appearance hasn't changed, I've been properly living after all."

While saying that Roxy was crunching away at some roasted bean snacks.

These beans are the seeds from Stone Treants.

With Roxy's sense of taste, she would never think they taste good.

Just, somehow or other she's moving them to her mouth.

It's a flavor that becomes a habit.

"In that sort of way. In the old days you were always desperate to be seen as an adult. If it were the old you, you would have been flying high from my words you know?"

"Is that the case? ...there may have been that sort of period."

We're talking about the time when I didn't want to accept my body height.

In the old days I didn't want my surroundings to think I was a child, so I gave it my best so that no one would underestimate me.

I'm a magician, there are no elements that I'm bad with, I made it public that I could do anything.

Before I noticed, that assessment had reversed, and my name alone started walking on its own.

Around the time I started being called "Water Saint Class Magician" things that I couldn't do were always being forced upon me.

In regards to the Magic Continent as well, the fact that I was Rudeus's teacher was a fact they were awfully surprised about.

It seems that Rudeus was going around saying, "It's the result of my shisho's teachings" at every chance he could.

Thanks to that, they even started to think that Roxy could use voiceless incantations.

Even though there's no way she could use something like voiceless incantation magic.

Once upon a time, I wonder if my own teacher felt this way about me is what Roxy was wondering.

If that's the case then she feels she did something bad and wants to reflect on it.

The agony of shisho who has disciples that are too superior.

It's not something you could understand until you actually experience standing in that position.

It's a feeling of pride, while at the same time a feeling of shame.

Although, as mysterious as it is up to now, she's never felt that she doesn't want to be called shisho.

Rudeus is protecting what he said, the fact that he's making public that Roxy is his shisho simply makes her happy.

"Nokopara hasn't changed a bit."

"Is that so?"

"Yes, other than your appearance."

The fact that he's greedy for money, how he aims for the weak, it's just the same as the old days.

That she doesn't want to turn Nokopara into an enemy is something Roxy thought a number of times in the old days.

"What is that, is that indirect way of saying I've grown old?"

"I guess you could say that is true. Nokopara has grown old."

"You've become able to say it haven't you."

Nokopara laughed in a nihilistic way with a hihin sound.

"How nostalgic..."

"That's right."

In those days there were two more here.

A boy who would spout abusive language every time Nokopara said something and a boy who would say "Oh my" and sigh every time a fight started before

attempting to break it up.

Already those two are gone, the ones remaining were just these middle-aged two.

Although, thanks to their race one of them isn't really all that old?

Passed days will no longer return.

That day, until Nokopara drank himself unconscious, those two let old memories bloom.

Her parents and an old friend.

Just the fact that she met these two gave meaning to her return here.

With those feelings, her chest has grown one cup.^[2]

Part 4

Rudeus should have arrived in Milishion about this time.

It's been six months since we passed by each other in Wind Port.

Even though it managed to overlap with the rainy season, the Holy Sword Highway is a path with nothing on it.

As long as they don't stop by villages of the elves or dwarves then they should have arrived in Milishion.

After all, as expected there was no need for us to come looking.

Just as Paul had said in his message, he was alright.

The girl named Eris who was teleported along with him.

With her alongside he easily passed through the Magic Continent.

Even though normally there would have been somewhere they were unable to progress, extremely simply and easily.

Moreover, with a Supard race who made Roxy helplessly afraid as an ally.

"Roxy's disciple sure is excellent huh."

"Really. It's hard to imagine that he is Paul's son."

Elinalize and Talhand praised him while saying that.

Though Roxy was thinking whose disciple or whose son are unrelated.

Rudeus was a genius before she met him.

Even if she hadn't met with him, he most likely would have been able to do this much.

Putting that aside.

"What are we going to do from here on out?"

After hearing Elinalize, Roxy started thinking.

For the time being, she wasn't able to meet with Rudeus which was her objective.

However, he's most likely already arrived in Milishion.

She really wants to meet him, but she shouldn't mistake what her objective was.

"Let's search the Northwest area of the Magic Continent."

Rudeus was found, but the remaining three were still missing.

Along the way up until now, they've found a number of refugees from Fedoa region.

Therefore, there should be some in the Northwestern area as well.

"Is it fine if you don't meet with your disciple?"

"I don't mind."

After Talhand asked that, Roxy shook her head.

For starters, now that she knows they passed by each other without even realizing it, she doesn't have the face to meet him.

She's already in a miserable state as his shisho.

"There are still plenty of towns on the Magic Continent. Just as we have until now, we'll go through each of them one by one."

The two exchanged glances and had a small laugh.

Roxy Migurudia's journey continues on.

Notes

1. Bureizu can also be read as Blaze. He was the leader of the group [Super Blaze] at the entrance of the forest of petrification. His party was shortly defeated and eaten by the Red-Fang Cobra.
2. This line should be more meaningful in the way it's worded, like one cup of alcohol to those feelings/thoughts, but at the same time knowing this author, this line could probably be taken quite literally like it's written her chest being held high (+1 cup size) filled with emotion... how profound...

Light Novel Extra Chapter - Nanahoshi Grilled Dragon

Part 1

East Port.

The largest port city, not just of Kingdom of Dragon King, but of the whole world.

They may share the same language, but the mood and store fronts here are quite different than those at Holy Kingdom of Milis.

But being my fourth port call in recent days, the novelty of it all had long wore off, so as soon as we disembarked I was ready to find a hotel.

It was then Eris suddenly said.

"Something smells good!"

A good smell? Like the scent of Eris nape after a long, hard training session?

With that thought I sniffled my nose, indeed the air carried a delicious fragrance.

The sun had already risen high, yet our tummies was left empty.

"I'm hungry."

"Me too..."

Eris nodded.

Her sights set at the source of the fragrance. It appeared to be a restaurant.

Awfully rundown for an restaurant.

Its walls battered with holes littered about. Its store sign so worn and old, the words on it had long faded from view.

Even the door won't close properly, ready to fell. More of a haunted house

than restaurant.

But the fragrance that lingers no doubt smelled delicious.

That fragrance carried over by the wind whetted our appetites. It smelled of nostalgia, causing my tummy to rumble.

"We're going in?"

Ruijerd asked me.

Without realizing it, my feet were already carrying me towards the restaurant.

"...Eh, is that a problem?"

"You once said, do judge a restaurant by its appearance."

I may have said that before.

But that was in the Magic Continent.

In Magic Continent, a restaurant's kemptness generally matched with the quality of food served within.

Of course, there're probably ugly restaurants with amazing food somewhere... but I never did gave them a shot.

But for some reason, my interests are piqued this time.

"Can't hurt, once a while."

"Well, as you said..."

With the two of them in tow, we went in.

The door creaked loudly as we opened it. Inside, it's as dirty as out.

No, dirty was the wrong word for it. It's obvious that cleanliness had been kept.

Simply rather shabby looking.

Chairs missing legs, tables with cracks in them, the floors were full of potholes.

Of course, not a customer in sight.

"Owner!"

Eris yelled merrily.

Completely remiss about the lack of customers at lunch time.

Even though I do felt some trepidation, my anticipation more than compensated.

"Welcome..."

As soon as we sat down, a skull looking man came by to drop off the menu.

Even so, he looked less than enthused.

You don't have to fake enthusiasm, but would it hurt to flash a smile at your customers?

"Rudeus, maybe it's best to eat elsewhere?"

It's rare for Ruijerd to raise an objection.

But let's not rush to judge off appearances.

"Well, the taste might surprise you."

The skull man interjected with a bitter smile while opening the menu.

The menu had only two options... Nanahoshi Grilled Dragon, and Boiled Alba Fish.

Restaurants in Milis usually had at least ten items to choose from.

Even shabby ones had more options than this.

Maybe with less options to sell, a restaurant could sell for cheaper?

"What would you like to order?"

Meat or fish?

Alba Fish are fished off the Southern Sea.

A commonly eaten fish in this area according to Ruijerd. Boiled dish, so a crock pot soup probably. A cooking method common in Kingdom of Dragon King.

Nanahoshi Grilled Dragon on the other hand?

I never heard of that before.

Kingdom of Dragon King has a Dragon King Mountain Range nearby. As the name suggests, the king of dragons resides there.

Supposedly, a dragon capable of controlling gravity itself, a meat from that?

Or something similar?

And Nanahoshi Grilled Dragon?

First time I heard of this cooking style, although I'm no expert of the various cuisines in this world.

Maybe a Kingdom of Dragon King specialty?

It pique my curiosity.

"Meat."

"Meat too."

"Then three orders of meat."

After taking order from these three carnivores, he skull man disappeared into the kitchen without saying a word.

Of course, no tea was served.

In this world, this level of service is typical.

As such, I used earth magic to make cups and served some water myself.

Self service.

For a weary body, a little water was just what the doctor ordered.

"Rudeus, refill!"

Eris chugged the water down in one gulp and began to chew through the cup.

Grumbling, I poured her another cup.

She could do her own chants if we're outside, but I won't make her indoors.

Since she couldn't quite control her water volume.

"..."

Ruijerd quietly sipped his, per usual.

This man wolfs down food quickly, but would never chugs his drink.

"Doesn't seem like this city has any important information for us."

"Yeah, there're some swords I'd like to check out, but maybe ones in the next city over would be even better?"

Perhaps a sign of its prosperity, but Kingdom of Dragon King features many sword shops.

The walk over were filled with sword stalls.

At first Eris' eyes glimmered with excitement, but they quickly faded in disappointment with realization that they're dull blades made to cheat rookies.

After practicing swordsmanship for so long, even Eris gained an eye for sword quality.

It's only natural.

"Excuse me!"

Just as we opened on this topic, the door was slammed open.

With his shoes still on, an pestering scum came barging in.

No, there's no custom of removing shoes here, even I wore mine.

Hearing that voice, the skull man came back out.

"Chagall..."

"Randolph, please give me an answer today!"

"No matter how many times you come, sorry, but my answer would never change."

"You idiot! You really plan to rot in this dump of a shop?"

"My ancestor started this shop.. no matter what, until I die..."

Overhearing, I understood the circumstances surrounding this restaurant.

The jist of it was business had been tough, so this store had to borrow money to stay afloat.

And that pestering scum a land developer of sorts.

"But excuse me... I have customers today."

"Customers! Wow, you have customers, how unusual!"

"I'm going to keep going, even with just one."

"Idiot."

After ridiculing him, the scum sat himself down by a nearby table.

The skull man took a glance before returning to the kitchen.

Must be rough.

Alright, I decided, if the food is good, I'll help spread the word.

"That guy is looking over."

"...."

"Stop it, Rudeus, I can't see!"

Eris was about to show displeasure, so I covered her eyes.

This can't be solved with fists, but with food.

Hey, stop, Eris, don't grab my palm, it's gonna break, it's breaking!

"Sorry for the wait."

While tussling with Eris, our orders arrived.

Seeing the dishes, my eyes bugged out.

"This is...!"

Nanahoshi Grilled Dragon.

An order of three parts.

First, the soup. A clear but savory vegetable soup.

Hard to mess that up, what's important is the other two dishes.

First, to the left, a main dish I had yet to see before in this world.

The emperor's white gold - rice.

No, the rice is slightly off white. Not pure white rice, but had some other grains mixed in. Mixed grain rice! It's been so long, can my eyes be deceiving me?

How nostalgic, this smell.

This is the scent of steamed rice. Nostalgia drew my full attention at it.

But what about the other side?

Cooked to an perfect yellow and gold, no matter what angle I looked at, it looks like...

Fried Chicken.

Along with a miso soup that's not really miso, and a steamed rice that's not really steamed rice.

This is a "Fried Chicken Combo"!

"Wow!"

"What is it?"

Ruijerd inquired the stirring me, while Eris stared at me confoundingly.

"No... It's nothing."

Fried chicken exists in this world.... A blessing from the heavens?

That Hitogami finally granted me what I had been yearning for.

Taste it well, taste it now, just taste it.

I clapped my hands together and offered the heaven and earth a prayer.

"I'm digging in."

No chopsticks, so with a spoon I shoveled a mouthful in.

"Wooooooo...."

Tears dripped from my eyes.

In my past life, my love of rice was so that I couldn't live without it.

Especially once past thirty, I even dared to declare that all I need to live was rice, ingesting two liters a day.

This rice, compared to the rice back then, wasn't particularly delicious.

Based on the rice scale in Japan, it probably won't even make Rank C.

But this is rice, real, eatable rice!

There's no good or bad when it comes to rice, today, I finally realized that.

"R-Rudeus... what happened?"

"No, it's nothing."

Like Imperial Japanese troops returning from the Siberian Campaign, I swallowed each tear soaked bite.

Carefully chewing every bite, savoring rice's every flavor.

My only regret was it wasn't enough, perhaps I should try the side dish to compensate.

I lifted my grubby hand at the fried chicken.

Stabbed it with a fork and shoved it in my mouth hole.

"Ugh!"

All the feelings that rice inspired in me instantly dissipated.

Conclusion: not fried chicken, it's worse than nothing.

The skin reeked of oil, the meat tasted foul and gamy.

Just a little nibble overwhelmed my nostrils with smell of tainted meat and oil.

I spat it all out.

"..."

Rage boiled over.

This.

I was supposed to have rice.... with this?

No, I would eat it as long as it's rice, but even just salt would be better as a condiment.

Rice and salt, 10 points.

This is not my battlefield.

But an anger boiled in my heart. To rice, this fried chicken was heresy.

"Owner!"

Part 2

I start lecturing the apprehensive owner.

First things first, the soup passes.

A broth-like vegetable soup with a slight hint of salt, a surprising match with the atypical mix grained rice.

I score the soup and rice 10 points, their affinity also 10 points.

A soup that demonstrated the chef's abilities.

The rice was also steamed well.

Water and heat were both adequate.

Proof of a professional at work, each grain of rice brought tears to ones eyes.

On a tangent, serving water should be a minimum.

For this, I'm willing to provide as much Ruijerd-brand water as he would like as a gift.

Better than any well water, a specialty water by yours truly.

After those accolades, I start slamming the fried chicken, aka "Nanahoshi Grilled Dragon".

An utter disgrace.

Unfit for human consumption, and you expect people to pay? I, Rudeus of Dead End, won't allow for it! Don't underestimate me!

The seething anger I displayed was akin to the head honcho of a particular culinary show.

Even I don't know why I got so angry.

Maybe because I was starving. Eventually, Eris and Ruijerd had to stop and drag me from the shop.

Maybe I over did it.

Even though I did say how much I love his rice.

I should really watch my actions as a guest.

This world had no gourmet ingredients to speak of.

It could very well be the oil used for fried chicken was already very expensive.

Maybe it was a mere coincidence, that this world had a culture of eating rice and knowledge of frying chicken.

So why was I so seething with anger?

When I left the store, I could see the store owner shriveled into himself, maybe even a tear in his eyes.

I was immature.

I must reflect on that...

Part 3

Owner's point of view

Business was bad.

Years without any customer. Even those that did come would not return, and debt just accumulates.

Yet, my one customer for the day flipped out on me.

Oil had to be hotter, it's worthless if the meat retained moisture. The meat tasted foul.

And finally said, "more than anything, it was the wrong meat."

Dragon meat had been this store's tradition for hundreds of years.

To criticize over something so fundamental, what's more to be done?

"No, I was a little shocked..."

That mousy fellow was chatting me up again.

Chagall Gargantis.

This man had pestered me for years.

"But that just now convinced you right? Even a kid like that could tear apart your culinary skills."

That Chagall always wore a disgusting smile on his face.

If I may be honest, he does have a good looking face and a good head over his shoulders.

Where he's recruiting me for, he has several dozen working under him.

Yet he always wore this ugly grin with questionable motives.

No makeover planned.

"Well... but...."

"I can appreciate you're sentimental, about continuing your family legacy, but

you has no business skills, no strength to protect this store."

Those straightforward words pierced my heart.

But he's right, whether in business or cooking I had skills in neither.

Even a kid like that found it disgusting, below par.

"But you have other talents. Every men have stuff they're good at and stuff they're not good at."

"You're right..."

I had no choice but agree.

I know now, what I had to do.

"I get it, time to close shop."

This shop's two hundred fifty years legacy, finally met its ruins in my hands.

This lifetime's shame will be my burden.

I feel.

That day.

General Generalissimo Chagall Gargantis of Kingdom of Dragon King successfully recruited a particular individual.

Fourth among the Seven Great Powers, "Death God" Randolph Marianne.

After years of refusing his offer, why did he accept it so suddenly?

Only a few ever knew.

Light Novel Extra Chapter - Death of Ariel

Part 1

My name is Gustav.

Situated in a dark corner of the Asura Capital City Ars is my savvy little private investigator office.

Modestly decorated, it dares to boast "nothing in Asura goes amiss here."

That kind of pronouncement is a conceit of mine.

One day, this rumor passed my ears.

"Second Princess Ariel-sama was assassinated on the way to Ranoa Magic University, perpetrator unknown."

The savvy I drew in the blanks, that Ariel's enemy, First Prince Grewell, had spread this rumor.

Ariel enjoys enormous popularity within the capital, with a pompous farewell ceremony as cover, quietly slipped out of the city.

Princess Ariel's convoy numbered 17 heads in all, too few a person of her station. But amongst them were the famed young knight Luke Notus Greyrat and the reputedly powerful "Silent Fitts". As such even my intelligence network failed to penetrate them.

Rumors of Ariel's fall in their political struggle had spread in the city.

Among the various rumors, one stood out.

That the real Ariel was assassinated spread like wildfire.

If only we had some eye witness account, but the details are vague. The source is unknown.

Trustworthiness is low. With how fast it spread, someone had obviously been manipulating in the background.

As such, being a private investigator, I was naturally inclined to dig for the truth. But I'd rather not be caught with the truth by some scheming palace nobles.

Considering that, I was going to just pretend I know nothing, and let it slide.

But after making that decision, someone paid me a visit soon after the spread of the rumor.

Being a savvy investigator, I naturally knew who it was.

Head of Ariel Faction, Philemon Notus Greyrat's underlying, one responsible for intelligence.

Pseudonyms and disguises were both useless against me.

Initially he was accusatory and overbearing. But once I exposed who he was, he was much more respectful with the request.

"Determine whether Princess Ariel was alive."

I was shocked by what I just heard.

Even her own faction lost contact with Ariel, and her safety unknown.

That, the savvy me, couldn't fathom.

Even though I had already decided to not investigate this... I nevertheless accepted the request.

Why?

Of course, the generous reward...

Part 2

To collect intel, I followed Ariel's trail from its start.

After Princess Ariel left the capital, she headed immediately North.

North of Asura Kingdom. Use study aboard at Magic University as a feint, but instead flee elsewhere... was not the case.

As I followed the breadcrumbs, I learned Ariel had been hounded.

The presence of black clothed gangs both before and after Ariel's convoy.

By the time they reached the next city, her escorts had decreased in number.

But that was within expectation.

If the journey was safe, Ariel's people won't be so worried to check on the princess' safety in the first place.

Ariel's guards fell one by one, but they continued northwards.

By the time they had arrived at Asura Kingdom's northern checkpoint, only ten escorts had remained.

Asura Kingdom's northern border.

A narrow valley known was the Red Dragon Upper Jaw, its southern edge flanked by densely covered forests.

Finally, I got my hands on a very convincing testimony.

He claimed to remember vividly the moment when Ariel arrived at the border checkpoint.

Testimony of Exit Managing Officer Justin Smiley

That day, my mood was sour.

More sour than usual.

I was just thinking about how this wasn't the right job for me.

Em? My job?

Eh, just boring work.

Checking the passport of people leaving the country to evaluate whether they need closer scrutiny. Mostly merchant doing business with the North, the rest largely adventurers and mercenaries.

The merchant usually had passports already, and the adventurers could exchange their adventurer licenses for passports.

Mercenary and traveler passports require further verification, but that's not part of my job.

Another managing officer handles that. So long as they're not wanted criminals, they usually pass.

Comparatively, the entry checkpoint was much stricter.

Identifying fake passports that criminals use was part of the job, but fighting them wasn't. I left the soldiers to handle that.

Like I said, so long they hadn't done anything too bad, exit passports were a simple affair. Only criminals won't receive them. Besides, wanted criminals would skip the checkpoint and use a smuggling route instead.

Intercepting smuggling organizations and breaking their route were also my job description.

But honestly, it's kind of a boring and meaningless job.

No chance for commendations no matter how hard I work, only to just quietly waste away. Thinking that I was already looking for another job.

The soldiers I work with, I didn't have a good relationship with them.

I treated them like idiots, and they thought me a sap, the typical dysfunction between rank and file.

Honestly, as a royal academy graduate, I thought I deserved better than languishing in the border.

Then Princess Ariel arrived... it was just passed noon.

In a double-wide luxury horse carriage, surrounded by seven escorts.

Including the driver and probable two passengers, they numbered ten in total.

Originally, I thought it was a mere noble sightseeing.

But here was home, and there was foreign soil and a great wild north of snow and dangerous magical beasts.

Not like no nobles ever went North before, but they usually would have a whole baggage train - with at least two, three wagons long and a couple dozen escorts.

High ranked adventurers could make do with less, since they're pretty tough folks. This group on the other hand looked awfully fragile, weakly guarded, staffed by folks unused to travel.

Why would they come to the border?

Maybe some high ranked minister finally came for a secret inspection?

That thought got me all worked up.

"Passport, please."

"Oh."

The one that responded was the young man leading the group.

A good looking man, even with the heavy fatigue on his face and dark circles under his eyes.

Right then I felt something off.

But the passport looked legit, a authentic passport issued by Asura Kingdom. Issued to the Notus Family, nothing wrong with it.

Normally, I'd just let them pass right then.

But nevertheless something felt off, and I recognized these faces.

Now I thought about it, He's Ariel's Guardian Knight, Luke Notus Greyrat. I

didn't realize it at first, since I hadn't seen him in a while.

I only stopped them out of habit.

Since the faces I make an effort to remember were generally criminals.

"Excuse me, may I inquire whom might be in the carriage?"

Hearing those words, the guards on duty blocked the checkpoint exit.

No matter how poor our relationship, we still got a job to do.

In response, Luke's group all turned rather anxious.

I see, so they do have a wanted man with them. I put on a front, but the wary youth shook his head.

"For her own reason, the person in the carriage prefers not to make an appearance."

Of course I won't let that pass.

I put on a troubled expression in order to encourage him to reconsider, and the youth's face twisted from agony.

The others... were well traveled. They're solemn, their hands on their sword scabbards by their waist. Their motions were well practiced and battle tested.

But most terrifying among them was the white-haired young man near the back.

Even with a beginner's wand wielded, he stood like a battle-hardened warrior, without any weak points to exploit, terrible to behold.

Must the rumored "Silent Fitts". Never in my life had I seen a kid that could a chill down my spine.

From experience, I knew that in a fight like this, we won't survive without casualties. Should I rush to order the soldiers to surround and arrest them? Or maybe I should...

In my confusion, a voice rang from the carriage.

"Fitts, stop at once."

That voice, a voice that could impregnate my ear.

A mesmerizing voice.

One I heard only once before, yet it already carved itself deep in my memory.

Ten years ago, during my graduation ceremony at the capital, the valedictorian speech. Only once, but I could never forget it. An unforgettable voice.

A voice that made everyone present regretted not being more diligent in their studies.

"Don't trouble them for merely performing their duties."

When the carriage door opened, I felt my whole body shaken, stirred.

That figure, one I could never forget.

During the graduation ceremony, a little princess was in attendance as honored guest.

A figure I'd pledge my allegiance to, one the whole nation would swear allegiance to, the very pride of a nation. That kind of emotion she inspired from me.

An unforgettable sight.

"E-excuse my insolence."

That beautiful princess with golden hair was even more dazzling up close. Immediately I couldn't help myself but kneel.

Without a doubt, the Asura Kingdom Second Princess, Ariel Anemoi Asura.

Always happy to bless public events with her presence, capital city's favorite royal.

Among the soldiers, many had seen her from afar, but even among them it was the first time meeting her up close.

"You may rise. As I had no urgent business with the border patrol, such salute is unnecessary"

While saying that, the princess stepped down from her carriage.

The surrounding soldiers also kneeled like I did.

As the Princess said, unless it was a special occasion, soldiers at the border

were absolved from kneeling at royalties.

I don't know why that was, but that was decided long ago.

The truth is, I shouldn't kneeled, nor had the soldiers ever before.

Even so, no one would be punished.

Just because it wasn't required, didn't mean it was outright banned. We would always kneel for the princess.

It would just feel odd otherwise.

"P-Princess Ariel-sama... I-I'm obligated to ask... Why had you come to the border with so few escorts?"

"What? Haven't you heard?"

Of course I knew the reason.

Wracking my brain for the answer, I suddenly recall something from a month ago.

Obviously, I wasn't this border station's highest ranked officer, nor was my immediate superior. Instead, he was an noble working as mayor in a nearby city.

He won't even come by once a month, unless for some errands or issuing orders.

His last order arrived suddenly.

"If some high aristocrats pass by in a few months, stop them."

When I heard a high aristocrat, I figure it'd be a long baggage chain some ten wagons long.

So it didn't come to mind when Ariel arrived.

"A high aristocrat will pass..."

"And then?"

Her question quickly jogged my memory.

Indeed, he said a high aristocrat.

"I'm afraid that high aristocrat would try to cross the border and flee to the

North. Do not let them pass, hold up them at a border hotel for a few days."

do not pass, hold them.

In other words, Princess Ariel will die here.

This wasn't the first time an order like this came down from above.

Whenever some noble tried to escape through here, an order like this would come down.

If the order was "pass", the noble would pass safely and flee to the north. If the order was "do not pass", the noble would mysteriously disappear inside the border forest.

I may be born in the capital, but I'm a mere civilian.

Far away from the political strife between noble factions.

Yet even I'm aware how dirty was palace intrigues amongst palace nobles.

Whether the hit was ordered for money or opportunism, I did not know.

Just that the target belonged to a different political faction than my boss.

Thus, this beautiful princess, after losing to my boss' faction, attempted to flee northwards, that's my deduction.

"..."

"Well, answer me."

I considered the situation.

If I just said with a smile, "Nothing, mere pleasantries. Unfortunately, this passport is incomplete and requires further verification. Please return tomorrow." It would be easy, and not a first for me. Even locking those up would be piece of cake.

But the question of righteousness flooded my mind..

For the good of the country was a phrase that never crossed my lips.

Not once did I ever think to do good "for the nation."

But that day, I really thought of that.

That day, the first time I witnessed Princess Ariel, on my graduation.

That day I really thought "the one I would serve, the pride of our nation."

That thought, mixed with the knowledge of threat to the young princess' life. I quickly came to a conclusion.

I'm no longer lost.

"I received an order to block a high aristocrat from leaving, and hold them at a nearby hotel for a few days."

The moment I said those words, the mood among the escorts instantly shifted.

Only Princess Ariel calmly asked.

"I see, then, what do you plan to do?"

"... Nothing."

"You refuse to perform in your duty? Disobeying a direct order, do you not know the price of disobedience is beheading?"

Seeing Princess Ariel's imposing response, I smiled.

"That order never informed me who this "high aristocrat" was, but surely he won't be fleeing the country on a shabby carriage with so few escorts."

"I see."

"Before my eyes is an unknown but impressively looking little girl. Little miss, what is your name again?"

Hearing these words, Princess Ariel smiled cheerfully.

Perhaps she was bemused for playing into the current farce.

"Ariel Canars, at your service, daughter of a low noble."

"Well then, Miss Ariel Canars, why are you heading North?"

"To study abroad at Magic University."

"Really? Then the passport is fine, I wish you a safe and happy journey."

"Thank you very much."

Princess Ariel, after taking a bow, inappropriate for a royal, returned to her horse carriage.

The driver started the cart moving again, her dazed escorts also followed suit.

"Okay, next..."

As I said that, I noticed something with my eyes.

Countless pairs of eyes from every soldier stationed glaring squarely at my office.

I desperately wanted to get away.

All of them were career soldiers. Unlike me, the capital trained them only to follow orders, not to think.

They may be my subordinates, but we're still different departments.

It's quite possible that they also received direct orders to "stop Princess Ariel".

The punishment for disobeying the order would fall to them as well.

They probably never imagine this Second Princess Ariel as head of a political faction.

But to my boss, she might be the most important enemy that mustn't escape. She could very well be working with her some unspeakable secrets.

If she was to escape, it wouldn't be surprising if we're all hanged.

I have decided, if this was exposed, I'll take the fall for it.

As I made my resolve, one among the soldiers slowly approached me.

His wide shoulders were probably three times of mine, the soldiers' captain.

He lifted his frying pan sized hand and gave me a nice pat.

Bracing for crushing bones, but it didn't hurt at all. The impact merely made me take a step backwards.

"Well done."

As the captain said that, all the soldiers around the office raised their fists.

Some even whistled.

Afterwards I learned that all the soldiers on this border control were Princess Ariel Faction.

Princess Ariel, they all remember her from their graduation ceremony.

Even though they mostly could only wave from afar, just like me. This outcome was easy for them to accept.

"Middle Officer Smiley! We all thought we would rot in this border, but something good finally happened! Everyone, would you agree?"

"Yeah!"

"Let's head to the tavern, I'm buying the rounds!"

The captain patted me on the back, and my mood turned unusually good.

I think my tomorrow would be a whole lot different with them.

Even though I don't comingle with royalties, I don't look for company among roughnecks either.

But that was then.

These people were just like me, casted away at the border. They're just doing the job after given a rotten order.

Realizing that... it somehow made me take a little more pride of my work.

Afterwards, my relationship with the soldiers improved significantly, and the day to day work turned less dreary.

This was all thanks to the Princess Ariel.

Once passed the border, she should be safe.

He went on to talk obsessively about Princess Ariel, so rest omitted...

Part 3

And so on.

His praises for Princess Ariel gone on and on, although interesting, wasn't really what I was here for.

"The black clothed gang that was pursuing Princess Ariel, did they passed through the border also?"

"Pursuers..? No."

"R-really?"

"Well, there was a suspicious group with dubious identification that passed the border some three days before Princess Ariel. I only heard about that afterwards."

I see, so the pursuers had already set up an ambush for the princess beforehand.

"If I knew it then, I'd warn her... but now, all I could do is pray for the Princess' safety."

"I see, thank you."

I guess the officer could not confirm or deny the rumor of Ariel's death.

But that was merely what the Capital rumored.

I still cannot determine whether Ariel was alive or dead.

I must continue the work collecting intel.

With what information available to me currently, I cannot call the job done.

Then I went on to check with other officers and soldiers, as well as investigate the hotel and border checkpoints.

What happened to Ariel afterwards?

Did she pass through the forest safely or not, or was she murdered as rumored?

Searching for intel, I went from hotel to hotel.

The savvy I finally found a young merchant with the information.

Merchant Bruno's testimony

That day, I was traveling down the road toward Asura Kingdom, with my merchandise per usual.

Red Dragon Upper Lip, crossing over Dragon's Beard... Huh? Ah, over there a gang of people north of the forest, yelling at something.

What merchandise I brought..? The only thing worth importing from the North, fur.

How many of us? Just one.

Escorts? Of course none. Do I look wealthy to you?

But I have confidence in my own strength, since I was trained at the Holyland of the Sword.

Oh, where was I...?

Oh, right, as we're passing the Dragon's Beard.

With Robinson as my companion. Eh? Where's Robinson? In the stable. Robinson is my donkey.

Anyways, I was walking with him.

Since business had gone smoothly, I was in a good mood. I had almost saved enough for a new wagon.

One that even a donkey could pull. With that the goods I can ship at once would greatly increase.

But in the road ahead, there's sound of swords clashing.

And the wind carried with it a burning smell.

Since I'm a traveling merchant, I'm ever vigilant of trouble like that.

Avoiding danger is job number one.

Even so, there's only one path, nor would I turn back. So Robinson and I dived into the forest to force our way around.

The smart move would be leaving the donkey behind, but I value my companion. I won't leave him behind, even if a magical beast attacked.

Robinson and I tried to keep our advance hidden.

The clatter of swords grew louder, and I could begin to hear shouting. Even though Robinson was afraid, after spending so many difficult years with me together, it still advanced despite its whimpering and unease.

What? Stop setting the scene and get on with it?

Pssh, busybodies... anyways.

So here's the deal, what I saw a horse carriage, not a big one. At most, it seats three, including the driver. One horse should be able to pull it alone, but this one had two. Maybe by regulation...? Why so much detail? Because I was wagon shopping. I asked the wagon merchant what size horse carriage could a donkey pull... okay, okay, I get it, you don't have to look so terrifying so sudden. Fine, I'll stop derailing myself.

I understood the instant I saw it, the carriage was under attack.

Why? Because it fell to its side, and those I presumed its escorts were engaging in desperate battle against a black clothed gang.

Seven black clothed and four escorts standing. They're guards for the carriage, or maybe simple followers? Two more had already fallen to the ground. Near the horse carriage were four more girls quivering, I'm afraid they're the ones being protected.

Regardless, the black clothed gang held the advantage.

But among the fallen were plenty black clothed ones as well.

The ground was littered with dozens of their bodies.

When I saw it, I was shocked, what idiots would plan an attack with so many casualties?

But I was wrong.

When I looked closely, the black clothed gangs didn't move like novices.

Or rather, they seem better trained than the guards. One vs one, the black clothed gang wouldn't be losing so badly.

Eh? Why did I stop?

As I was saying, don't judge me by my appearance, but I have confidence in my strength. I can tell by watching their strength and weaknesses.

That's why, curiosity got the better of me and I stopped to watch.

Only one among the escorts was moving gracefully.

A white-haired young man, wielding a rookie magic wand.

He was on another level.

In the Holyland of Swords, there're Sword Saints and Sword Kings with reaction times far beyond us mere mortals.

From that experience, I instantly could tell that he was an individual of excellent judgment.

When an ally fell in trouble, he'll instantly fire off magic to aid him.

Even so, keeping his magic capacity in reserve, he took care to use only elementary magic.

Calling it a miracle assist wouldn't be far from the truth.

Those movements were well practiced.

I couldn't hear any incantation from my position, so perhaps he knew chantless magic.

A chantless magician... what a remarkable thing to witness.

Even so.

I'm afraid the black clothed gang was also battle-tested, and as such took down many of his allies.

Moreover, all the guards left standing were exhausted.

From my evaluation, if another gets taken out, defeat would be imminent.

It was that kind of atmosphere.

But the black clothed gang was surprisingly cautious.

They suddenly switched tactics, probably using a predetermined cue, but I didn't spot what it was.

The three sword wielding guards did not react in time.

Only the white haired youth did.

With incredible focus, he unleashed an area effect magic and sent two to their deaths.

The black clothed gang split up, with two rushed at the white haired youth, and the remaining three toward the carriage.

In that instant, their defensive parameter was broken, but the white haired youth remained unwaver.

Rather than focusing on the two rushing at him, he instead pointed his wand at those focusing on the girls. Impressive, that he could put their safety above his own.

All these happened simultaneously the next moment.

First, the white-haired youth unleashed magic, took down two of the three there.

Then he dodged out of the path of those charging at him.

Those two got entangled in a fight with two guards.

The final black clothed gang member swung at the head of one of the quivering girls.

In that instant, the last guard stabbed the black clothed person from behind.

With pride, the last black clothed person lifted up the severed head, and died.

I'm afraid these guards were tasked with protecting with some noble's daughter.

The remaining five were stunned.

Their companion dead, the one they're tasked to protect, it was only natural for them to be.

Once I confirmed the resolution, I left the scene.

Won't' be fun to hang around with magic beasts sniffing at the scent of bloodbath, nor do I want to be swamped by requests.

With Robinson in tow, we left....

Part 4

After meeting with the merchant, I collated his testimony with the managing officer's. After peacefully passing through the border, the Princess Ariel was ambushed in the forest and died in a desperate battle to her pursuers.

The rumors Ariel Faction had feared the most came true, Ariel had died.

But some mysteries remained.

What of the surviving guards?

At least five survived.

Luke Notus Greyrat was unknown, but at least "Silent Fitts" had survived.

Despite being so conspicuous, yet I haven't heard of his return to the capital.

Perhaps he returned through a route I'm unaware of, but the fact that they had passed the border was certain.

Assuming no other intel forthcoming, they may headed north anyways.

Quite possible. With their mission to protect the princess failed, they may fled to avoid prosecution.

I could understand why they would flee from the country and continued north instead...

Unfortunately, even though my private investigator office's slogan was "nothing in Asura goes amiss here."

I lacked sources outside of Asura.

Besides, my investigation was the whereabouts of Second Princess Ariel.

Not her guards.

And I'd rather not cross the border.

The merchant brought some nice beer from the North, so I might as well have a few.

Part 5

After reporting on my findings, Ariel Faction was in tears.

The normally imposing intel officer, getting so emotional over the news, was refreshing to see.

Anyways, I received my payments, my job was done.

Seeing his reaction, I should just take my payment and buy some good beer and dinner to avoid souring my mood.

With that thought, I took my beer jug and head to the tavern.

After sat myself at my favorite seat, I placed my order. This is my permanent spot where I could observe the whole tavern.

Sitting here and listening in on the conversations about the tavern was also one of my skills.

This skill let me in at all sorts of secrets, one I have made a living off of.

"Say, I heard rumors recently that the princess died. Did you?"

"Em, you believe that?"

"No, I don't want to, but..."

Hearing the topic at hand, I turned my head.

A strong man and one past his prime, drinking face to face.

A couple of pawns unknown to the truth. That thought made me felt pretty good about myself. Working in intelligence had its benefits.

"I work at the border."

"You can stop, I know where uncle worked at. You don't need to tell me again about finally getting a vacation after twenty years."

"Hey, what do you know? But do you know what my job at the border was?"

"That I don't."

The topic changed, and I soon lost my interest.

My order had arrived. It's enough, I done my job. My next mission is a place with good drinks.

"The watchtower."

My focus returned to him once more.

"Seating at the top of the tower and observing the far exit of the forest with a far-seeing magic tool, that's my job."

"Oh?"

"So when I heard that Princess Ariel crossed the border from the soldiers. I was among those who want a good look at the princess, so I checked her out with the tool."

"Well? What did you see?"

"Ah, without a doubt, I saw Ariel-sama."

How suspicious.

Either this soldier was lying, or the merchant was.

No, that's not right. The merchant could simply be mistaken, and the girl murdered wasn't Princess Ariel.

Ariel was royalty, and I heard of rumors of them using performer's magic tools to escape ambushes.

In other words, in a hurry, I misinterpreted the evidence.

And gave client false intel.

No good. I have a duty to truthfully report what I just heard...

"... Sorry for the wait."

But right then my order had arrived.

In front of me was a hot meal and beer, uncommon even in the capital.

"Forget it."

I sat back down.

If she really survived and study abroad at Magic University, then the truth will

spread around the world.

Returning my pad would certainly suck, maybe I should leave the capital for a while. To think soldiers on the watchtower would confirm sighting of Princess Ariel... well well, even the savvy me didn't think of that.

The investigation office provided false intelligence.

Because of that, Ariel Faction leader Philemon Notus Greyrat had to make a difficult choice, and end up cornered... but that was a story of much later time.

Credits

| | | |
|---------------|---|-------------------------------|
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| Illustrator | — | Shirotaka |
| Publisher | — | <u>(角川書店) Kadokawa Shoten</u> |
| Translator | — | <u>Baka-Tsuki</u> |
| Book designer | — | <u>Armaell</u> |



「弟子に会わなくても
ええのか？」

「構いません」